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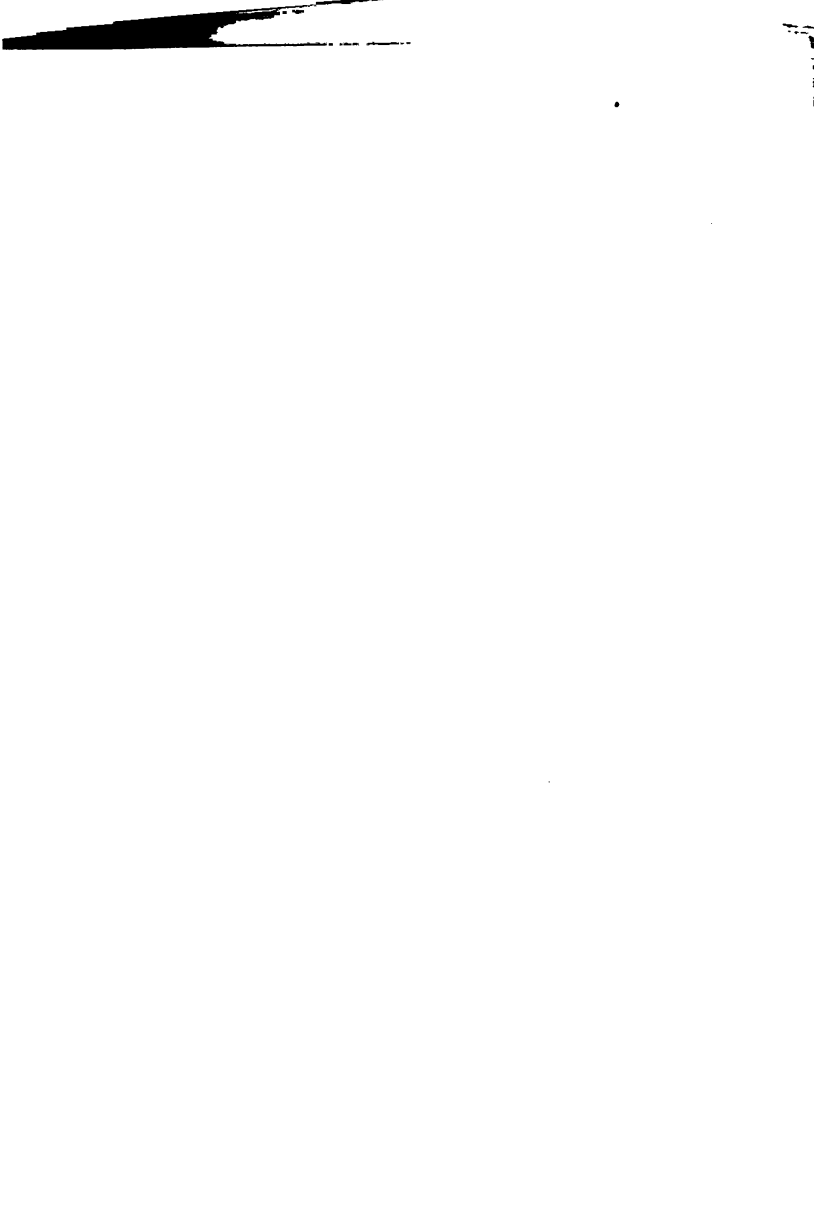
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THE POEMS  
OF  
FREDERICK LOCKER



NEW YORK  
WHITE, STOKES, AND ALLEN  
1883





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## POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

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### THE OLD CRADLE.

AND this was your Cradle? Why,  
surely, my Jenny,  
Such cosy dimensions go clearly to  
show  
You were an exceedingly small picka-  
ninny  
Some nineteen or twenty short sum-  
mers ago.

Your baby-days flow'd in a much-trou-  
bled channel;  
I see you, as then, in your impotent  
strife,

**8 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.**

A tight little bundle of wailing and flannel,  
Perplex'd with the newly-found fardel  
of Life.

To hint at an infantile frailty's a scandal;  
Let bygones be bygones, for somebody knows  
It was bliss such a Baby to dance and to dandle,—  
Your cheeks were so dimpled, so rosy  
your toes.

Ay, here is your Cradle; and Hope, a  
bright spirit,  
With Love now is watching beside it,  
I know.  
They guard the wee nest it was yours to inherit  
Some nineteen or twenty short summers ago.

It is Hope gilds the future, Love welcomes it smiling;



Thus wags this old world, therefore  
stay not to ask,  
"My future bids fair, is my future be-  
guiling?"  
If mask'd, still it pleases—then raise  
not its mask.

Is Life a poor coil some would gladly be  
doffing?  
He is riding post-haste who their  
wrongs will adjust;  
For at most 'tis a footstep from cradle  
to coffin—  
From a spoonful of pap to a mouthful  
of dust.

Then smile as your future is smiling,  
my Jenny;  
I see you, except for those infantine  
woes,  
Little changed since you were but a  
small pickaninny—  
Your cheeks were so dimpled, so rosy  
your toes!

10 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Ay, here is your Cradle, much, much  
to my liking,

Though nineteen or twenty long win-  
ters have sped.

Hark! As I'm talking there's six o'clock  
striking,—

It is time JENNY'S BABY should be in  
its bed.

1855.

## PICCADILLY.

*Minnie, in her hand a sixpence,  
Toddled off to buy some butter  
(Minnie's pinafore was spotless)  
Back she brought it to the gutter ;  
Gleeful, radiant, as she thus did,  
Proud to be so largely trusted.*

*One, two, three small steps she'd taken  
Blissfully came little Minnie ;  
When, poor haunting ! down she tumbled,  
Daubed her hands, and face, and pinny,  
Dropping, too, the little slut, her  
Pat of butter in the gutter.*

*Never creep back so despairing—  
Dry those eyes, my little fairy :  
Most of us start off in high glee,  
Many come back " quite contrary."  
I've mourn'd sixpences in scores too,  
Damaged hopes and pinafores too.*

A SKETCH IN SEVEN DIALS.

PICCADILLY ! Shops, palaces, bustle,  
and breeze,  
The whirring of wheels, and the mur-  
mur of trees ;  
By night or by day, whether noisy or  
stilly,  
Whatever my mood is, I love Piccadilly.

12 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Wet nights, when the gas on the pavement is streaming,  
And young Love is watching, and old Love is dreaming,  
And Beauty is whirling to conquest, where shrilly  
Cremona makes nimble thy toes, Piccadilly!

Bright days, when a stroll is my afternoon wont,  
And I meet all the people I do know, or don't :—  
Here is jolly old Brown, and his fair daughter Lillie—  
No wonder some Pilgrims affect Piccadilly!

See yonder pair riding, how fondly they saunter,  
She smiles on her poet, whose heart's in a canter!  
Some envy her spouse, and some covet her filly,  
He envies them both,—he's an ass, Piccadilly!

Were I such a bride, with a slave at my  
feet,  
I would choose me a house in my fa-  
vourite street ;  
Yes or no—I would carry my point,  
willy-nilly :  
If “no,”—pick a quarrel ; if “yes,”—  
Piccadilly !

From Primrose balcony, long ages  
ago,  
“Old Q.” sat at gaze,—who now passes  
below ?  
A frolicsome statesman,—the Man of the  
Day ;  
A laughing philosopher, gallant and  
gay ;  
Never darling of fortune more manfully  
trod,  
Full of years, full of fame, and the  
world at his nod :  
Can the thought reach his heart, and  
then leave it more chilly—  
“Old P. or Old Q.,—I must quit Picca-  
dilly” ?

14 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Life is chequer'd ; a patchwork of  
smiles and of frowns ;

We value its ups, let us muse on its  
downs ;

There's a side that is bright, it will then  
turn us t'other,

One turn, if a good one, deserves yet  
another.

*These* downs are delightful, *these* ups  
are not hilly,—

Let us turn one more turn ere we quit  
Piccadilly.

## THE OLD GOVERNMENT CLERK.

(OLD STYLE.)

*A kindly, good man, quite a stranger to fame,  
His heart still is green, tho' his head shows a  
hoar lock;*

*Perhaps his particular star is to blame,—  
It may be he never took Time by the forelock.*

WE knew an old scribe, it was "once  
on a time,"

An era to set sober datists despair-  
ing :

Then let them despair ! Darby sat in a  
chair,

Near the Cross that gave name to the  
village of Charing.

Though silent and lean, Darby was not  
malign,

What hair he had left was more silver  
than sable ;

16 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

He had also contracted a curve in the  
spine,  
From bending too constantly over a  
table.

His pay and expenditure, quite in ac-  
cord,  
Were both on the strictest economy  
founded ;  
His rulers were known as the Sealing-  
wax Board,  
—They ruled where red tape and  
snug places abounded.

In his heart he look'd down on this dig-  
nified knot ;  
And why? The forefather of one of  
these senators—  
A rascal concern'd in the Gunpowder  
Plot—  
Had been barber-surgeon to Darby's  
progenitors.

Poor fool, is not life a vagary of  
luck?



THE OLD GOVERNMENT CLERK. 17

For thirty long years—of genteel destitution—

He'd been writing despatches ; which  
means he had stuck

Some heads and some tails to much  
circumlocution.

This would seem rather weary and  
dreary ; but, no !

Though strictly inglorious, his days  
were quiescent.

His red-tape was tied in a true-lover's  
bow

Every night when returning to Rose-  
mary Crescent.

There Joan meets him smiling, the  
young ones are there ;

His coming is bliss to the half-dozen  
wee things ;

The dog and the cat have a greeting to  
spare,

And Phyllis, neat-handed, is laying  
the tea-things.

18 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

East wind, sob eerily! Sing, kettle,  
cheerily!

Baby's abed, but its father will rock  
it;—

His little ones boast their permission to  
toast

That cake the good fellow brings home  
in his pocket.

This greeting the silent old Clerk under-  
stands,

Now his friends he can love, had he  
foes he could mock them;

So met, so surrounded, his bosom ex-  
pands,—

Some hearts have more need of such  
homes to unlock them.

And Darby at least is resign'd to his lot;

And Joan, rather proud of the sphere  
he's adorning,

Has well-nigh forgotten that Gunpow-  
der Plot,—

And *he* won't recall it till ten the next  
morning.

THE OLD GOVERNMENT CLERK. 19

A day must be near when, in pitiful  
case,

He will drop from his Branch, like a  
fruit more than mellow ;

Is he yet to be found in his usual place ?

Or is he already forgotten ? poor  
fellow !

If still at his duty he soon will arrive ;

He passes this turning because it is  
shorter ;

He always is here as the clock's going  
five

—Where is he ? . . . Ah, it is  
 chiming the quarter !

1856.

## THE PILGRIMS OF PALL MALL.

*Her eyes and her hair  
Are superb;  
She stands in despair  
On the herb.  
Quick, stranger, advance  
To her aid :—  
She's across, with a glance  
You're repaid.  
She's fair, and you're tall,  
fal-lal-la !—  
What will come of it all?  
Chi lo sa !  
CUPID ON THE CROSSING.*

My little friend, so small, so neat,  
Whom years ago I used to meet  
In Pall Mall daily,  
How cheerily you tript away  
To work, it might have been to play,  
You tript so gaily.

And Time trips too ! This moral means  
You then were midway in the teens

That I was crowning ;  
We never spoke, but when I smiled  
At morn or eve, I know, dear Child,  
You were not frowning.

Each morning that we met, I think  
One sentiment us two did link,  
Not joy, nor sorrow ;  
And then at eve, experience-taught,  
Our hearts were lighter for the thought,—  
*We meet to-morrow !*

And you were poor, so poor ! and why ?  
How kind to come, it was for my  
Especial grace meant !  
Had you a chamber near the stars,—  
A bird,—some treasured plants in jars.  
About your casement ?

Often I wander up and down,  
When morning bathes the silent town  
In dewy glory  
Perhaps, unwitting, I have heard  
Your thrilling-toned canary-bird  
From that third story.

22 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

I've seen some change since last we  
met—

A patient little seamstress yet,  
On small wage striving,  
Have you a Lilliputian spouse?  
And do you dwell in some doll's  
house?—  
Is baby thriving?

My heart grows chill! Can soul like  
thine,  
Weary of this dear World of mine,  
Have loosed its fetter,  
To find a world, whose promised bliss  
Is better than the best of this?—  
And is it better?

Sometimes to Pall Mall I repair,  
And see the damsels passing there;  
But if I try to . . .  
To get one glance, they look dis-  
creet,  
As though they'd some one else to  
meet:—  
As have not I too?

THE PILGRIMS OF PALL MALL. 23

Yet still I often think upon  
Our many meetings, come and gone,  
July—December !  
Now let us make a tryst, and when,  
Dear little soul, we meet again,  
In some serener sphere, why then  
Thy friend remember.

1856.

## MANY YEARS AFTER.

I SAW some books exposed for sale—  
Some dear, and some—drama and  
tale—

As dear as any :  
A few, perhaps more orthodox  
Or torn, were tumbled in a box—  
*" All these a penny."*

I open'd one at hazard, but  
Its leaves tho' soil'd were still uncut ;  
And yet before  
I'd read a page, I felt indeed  
A wish to cut that leaf, and read  
Some pages more.

A poet sang of what befel  
When, years before, he'd paced Pall  
Mall ;



While walking thus—

A boy—he'd met a maiden. (Then  
Fair women all were brave, and men  
Were virtuous !)

They oft had met, he wonder'd why ;  
He praised her sprightly bearing. (I  
Believe he meant it :)  
No word had pass'd, but if he smiled  
Her eyes had seem'd to say (poor  
child !)

*" I don't resent it."*

And then this poet mused and grieved,  
And spoke some kindly words, relieved  
By kindlier jest :  
Then he, with sad, prophetic glance,  
Bethought him she, ere then, perchance,  
Had found her rest.

Then I was minded how my Joy  
Sometimes had told me of a boy  
With curly head—  
" You know," she'd laugh (she then  
was well !)

26 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

"I used to meet him in Pall Mall—  
Ere I was wed."

And then, in fun, she'd vow "Good  
lack,

I'll go there now, and fetch thee back  
At least a curl!"

She once was here, now she is gone!—  
And so, you see, my wife was yon  
Bright little girl.

I am not one for shedding tears—  
That boy's now dead, or bow'd with  
years—

But see—*sometimes*

*He'd thought of Her!*—that made me  
weep;

That's why I bought and why I keep  
His book of rhymes.

## TEMPORA MUTANTUR !

*He dropt a tear on Susan's bier,  
He seem'd a most despairing swain ;  
But bluer sky brought newer tie,  
And—would he wish her back again ?  
The moments fly, and when we die,  
Will Philly Thistletop complain ?  
She'll cry and sigh, and—dry her eye,  
And let herself be woo'd again.*

A KIND PROVIDENCE.

YES, here, once more a traveller,  
I find the Angel Inn,  
Where landlord, maids, and serving-  
men

Receive me with a grin :  
Surely they can't remember Me,  
My hair is grey and scanter ;  
I'm changed, so changed since I was  
here—

*O tempora mutantur !*

The Angel's not much alter'd since  
The happy month of June,

28 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

That brought me here with Pamela  
To spend our honeymoon.  
Ah me, I even recollect  
The shape of this decanter !—  
We've since been both much put about—  
*O tempora mutantur !*

Ay, there's the clock, and looking-  
glass  
Reflecting me again ;  
She vow'd her Love was very fair,  
I see I'm very plain.  
And there's that daub of Prince Leeboo :  
'Twas Pamela's fond banter  
To fancy it resembled me—  
*O tempora mutantur !*

The curtains have been dyed ; but there,  
Unbroken, is the same,  
The very same crack'd pane of glass  
On which I scratch'd her name.  
Yes, there's her tiny flourish still ;  
It used to so enchant her  
To link two happy names in one—  
*O tempora mutantur !*

*What brought this pilgrim here ? and  
why*

*Was Pamela away ?*

*It may be she had found her grave,*

*Or he had found her gay.*

*The fairest fade, the best of men*

*Have met with a supplanter ;*

*I wish that I could like this cry*

*Of tempora mutantur !*

1856.

## CIRCUMSTANCE.

### THE ORANGE.

*"At Brighton, just a year ago,  
As I was leaving maison MUTTON,  
My scarf got caught, it vex'd me so,  
On that tall Captain Ross's button.  
I thought he'd think me too inane  
And awkward that September sunny,  
And now September's come again!  
And now we're married!—ain't it funny?"*

EXTRACT FROM MRS. ROSS'S DIARY.

IT ripen'd by the river banks,  
Where, mask and moonlight aid-  
ing,  
Dons Blas and Juan play their pranks,  
Dark Donnas serenading.

By Moorish damsel it was pluck'd,  
Beneath the golden day there;  
By swain 'twas then in London suck'd—  
Who flung the peel away there.

He could not know in Pimlico,  
As little she in Seville,  
That / should reel upon that peel,  
And—wish them at the devil.

1856.

## ARCADIA.

*Yes, Fortune deserves to be chidden,  
It is a coincidence queer—  
Whenever one wants to be hidden  
Some blockhead is sure to appear !*

THE healthy-wealthy-wise affirm  
That early birds obtain the worm,—  
(The worm rose early too !)  
Who scorns his couch should glean by  
rights  
A world of pleasant sounds and sights  
That vanish with the dew.

Bright Phosphor, from his watch re-  
leased,  
Now fading from the purple east,  
As morning gets the stronger ;—  
The comely cock that vainly strives  
To crow from sleep his drowsy wives,  
Who would be dozing longer.



Uxorious Chanticleer—And hark  
Upraise thine eyes, and find the lark,  
The matutine musician  
Who heavenward soars on rapture's  
wings,  
Sought, yet unseen—who mounts and  
sings  
In musical derision.

From sea-girt pile, where nobles dwell,  
A daughter waves her sire *Farwell*  
Across the sunlit water :  
All these were heard or seen by one  
Who stole a march upon that sun  
And then upon that daughter.

This dainty maid, the country's pride,  
A white lamb trotting at her side,  
Had tript it through the park ;  
A fond and gentle foster-dam,  
Maybe she slumber'd with her lamb,  
Thus rising with the lark.

The lambkin frisk'd, the lady fain  
Would coax him back, she call'd in  
vain,

34 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

The rebel proved unruly ;  
The sun came streaming o'er the lake ;—  
One followed for the maid's dear sake,  
A happy fellow truly.

The maid gave chase, the lambkin ran  
As only woolly truant can  
Who never felt a crook ;  
But stayed at length, as if disposed  
To drink, where tawny sands disclosed  
The margin of a brook.

His mistress, who had followed fast,  
Cried, " Little rogue, you're caught at  
last ;  
You've made me lose my shoe ! "  
She then the wanderer convey'd  
Where kindly shrubs, in branching  
shade,  
Were screen and shelter too :

And timidly she glanced around,  
All fearful lest the slightest sound  
Might mortal footfall be ;  
Then shrinkingly she stept aside

One moment—and her garter tied  
The truant to a tree.

Perhaps the world would like to know  
The hue of this enchanting bow,  
And if 'twere silk or laced ;  
No, not from him ! Be pleased to think  
It might be either—blue or pink ;  
'Twas tied with maiden taste.

Suffice it that the child was fair  
As Una, blythe, with golden hair,  
And come of high degree ;  
And though her feet were pure from  
stain,  
She turned her to the brook again,  
And laved them dreamingly.

Awhile she sat in maiden mood,  
And watched the shadows from the  
wood,  
That varied on the stream ;  
And as each pretty foot she dipp'd,  
The little waves rose crystal-lipp'd  
In welcome, as 'twould seem.

36 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Yet reveries are fleeting things,  
That come and go on whimsy wings ;  
    As kindly fancy taught her,  
The Fair her tender day-dream nursed ;  
But when the light-blown bubble burst,  
    She wearied of the water ;

Betook her to the spot where, yet,  
Safe tether'd lay her captured pet,  
    To roving tastes a martyr ;  
But all at once she spied a change,  
And scream'd (it seem'd so very  
    strange !)—  
Cried Echo, *Where's my garter ?* . .

The Lady led her lambkin home !  
Maybe she thought, "No more we'll  
    roam  
    At peep of day together ;"  
Well, if they do, or if they don't,  
It's pretty clear that roam she won't  
    Without an extra tether.

A pure white stone will mark this  
    morn ;

He wears a prize, one gladly worn,  
Love's gage, though not intended ;  
And let him wear it near his heart,  
Till sun, and moon, and stars depart,  
And chivalry has ended.

Dull World ! He now resigns to you  
The tinsel star, and ribbon blue,  
That pride for folly barter :  
He'll bear his cross amid your jars,  
His ribbon prize, and thank his stars  
He does not crave your garters.

1849.

## THE CASTLE IN THE AIR.

*The old, old tale ! ay, there's the smart :  
Her heart, or what she call'd her heart,  
Was hard as granite :  
Who breaks a heart and then emits  
To gather up the broken bits,  
Is heartless, Janet.*

YOU shake your saucy curls, and vow  
I build no airy castles now ;  
You smile, and you are thinking too,  
He's nothing else on earth to do.

It needs romance, my Lady Fair,  
To build a Castle in the Air :  
Ethereal brick, and rainbow beam,  
The gossamer of fancy's dream ;  
Much, too, the architect may lack,  
Who labours in the Zodiac,  
To rear what I, from chime to chime,  
Attempted once upon a time.

My Castle was a gay retreat  
 In Air, that rather gusty shire,  
 A cherub's model country seat,—  
 Could model cherub such require.  
 Nor twinge nor tax existence tortured,  
 Even the cherub spared my orchard !  
 No worm destroyed the gourd I planted,  
 And showers came when rain was wanted.  
 I own'd a tract of purple mountain,  
 A sweet mysterious haunted fountain,  
 A terraced lawn, a summer lake,  
 By sun- or moon-beam always burn-  
 ish'd ;  
 And then my cot, by some mistake,  
 Unlike most cots, was neatly fur-  
 nish'd.—  
 A trellis'd porch, a pictured hall,  
 A Hebe laughing from the wall ;  
 Vases, Etruscan and Cathay ;  
 While under arms and armour wreath'd —  
 In trophied guise, the marble breathed—  
 A peering faun—a startled fay.  
  
 On silken cushion, laced and pearl'd,  
 A shaggy pet from Skye was curl'd ;

40 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

While, drowsy-eyed, would dosing swing  
A parrot in his golden ring.

All this I saw one happy day,  
And more than now I care to name ;  
Here, lately shut, that work-box lay,  
There stood your own embroidery  
frame.

And over this piano bent  
A Form from some pure region lent.  
Her auburn tresses darkly shone  
In clusters, lovely as your own ;  
And as her fingers touch'd the keys,  
How strangely they resembled these !

Yes, you, you only, Lady Fair,  
Adorn'd a Castle in the Air,  
Where Life, without the least foundation  
Became a charming occupation.  
We heard with much sublime disdain  
The far-off thunder of Cockaigne ;  
And saw through rifts of silver cloud  
The rolling smoke that hid the crowd.  
With souls released from earthly tether  
We hymn'd the tender moon together.



Our sympathy from night to noon  
Rose crescent with that crescent moon ;  
The night was briefer than the song,  
And happy as the day was long.  
We lived and loved in cloudless climes,  
And died (in verse) a thousand times !

Yes, you, you only, Lady Fair,  
Adorn'd my Castle in the Air.  
Now, tell me, could you dwell content  
In such a baseless tenement ?  
Say, could so delicate a flower  
Exist in such a breezy bower ?  
Because, if you would settle in it,  
'Twere built for love in half a minute.

What's love ? Why love (for two) at  
best  
Is only a delightful jest ;  
But not so nice for one or three,—  
I only wish you'd jest with me.

You shake your head and wonder why  
A denizen of dear Mayfair  
Should be so silly as to try

42 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

And build a Castle in the Air.  
"I've music, books, and all," you say,  
"To make the gravest lady gay.  
I'm told my essays mark research,  
My sketches have endow'd a church ;  
I've partners who have brilliant parts—  
I've lovers who have broken hearts.  
Poor Polly would not care to fly,  
And Mop, you know, was born in Skye.  
To realise your *tête-à-tête*  
Might jeopardise a giddy pate ;  
Indeed, my much devoted vassal,  
I'm sorry that you've built your Castle !"

The lady's smile showed no remorse,—  
"My worthless toy has lost its gild-  
ing,"

I murmur'd with pathetic force,  
"And here's an end of castle-build-  
ing ;"

Then strode away in mood morose  
To blame the Sage of Careless Close ;  
He trifled with my tale of sorrow,—  
"What's marr'd to-day is made to-  
morrow ;

Romance can roam not far from home,  
Knock gently, she must answer soon ;  
I'm sixty-five, and yet I strive  
To hang my garland on the moon."

1848.

## A WISH.

To the south of the church, and beneath  
yonder yew,  
A pair of child lovers I've seen ;  
More than once were they there, and  
the years of the two  
When united, might number thirteen.

They sat by a grave that had never a  
stone  
The name of the dead to determine ;  
It was Life paying Death a brief visit,  
—a known  
And a notable text for a sermon.

They tenderly prattled ; oh what did  
they say ?  
The turf on that hillock was new.  
Little Friends, could ye know aught of  
death or decay ?  
Could the dead be regardful of you ?

I wish to believe, and believe it I  
must,  
That there her loved father was laid :  
I wish to believe—I will take it on  
trust—  
That father knew all that they said.

My Own, you are five, very nearly the  
age  
Of that poor little fatherless child,  
And some day a true-love your heart  
will engage,  
When on earth I my last may have  
smiled.

Then come to my grave, like a good lit-  
tle lass,  
Where'er it may happen to be ;  
And if any daisies should peer through  
the grass,  
Be sure they are kisses from me.

And place not a stone to distinguish my  
name,  
For stranger and gossip to see ;

46 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

But come with your lover, as these lovers came,  
And talk to him sweetly of me.

And while you are smiling, your father  
will smile

Such a dear little daughter to have ;  
But mind,—oh yes, mind you are happy  
the while—

*I wish you to visit my grave.*

1856.

## GERALDINE GREEN.

### I.

#### THE SERENADE.

*If pathos should thy bosom stir  
To tears more sweet than laughter,  
Then bless its kind interpreter,  
And love him ever after !*

LIGHT slumber is quitting  
The eyelids it prest ;  
The fairies are flitting,  
Who charm'd thee to rest.  
Where night dews were falling,  
Now feeds the wild bee ;  
The starling is calling,  
My darling, for thee.

The wavelets are crisper  
That thrill the shy fern ;  
The leaves fondly whisper,  
" We wait thy return."

48 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Arise then, and hazy  
Distrust from thee fling,  
For sorrows that crazy  
To-morrows may bring.

A vague yearning smote us,  
But wake not to weep ;  
My bark, Love, shall float us  
Across the still deep,  
To isles where the lotus  
Erst lulled thee to sleep.

1862.

II.

MY LIFE IS A ———.

*Fair Emma mocks my trials,  
She jokes her jokes in Severn's  
At me in Seven Dials.—*

At Worthing, an exile from Geraldine  
G——,  
How aimless, how wretched an exile is  
he !  
Promenades are not even prunella and  
leather  
To lovers, if lovers can't foot them  
together.



He flies the parade, by the ocean he  
stands ;

He traces a "Geraldine G." on the  
sands ;

Only "G." though her loved patro-  
nymic is "Green,"—

"I will not betray thee, my own Geraldine."

The fortunes of men have a time and a  
tide,

And Fate, the old Fury, will not be  
denied ;

That name was, of course, soon wiped  
out by the sea,—

She jilted the exile, did Geraldine G.

They meet, but they never have spoken  
since that ;

He hopes she is happy—he knows she  
is fat ;

*She*, wooed on the shore, now is wed in  
the Strand,—

And *I*—it was I wrote her name on the  
sand.

## VANITY FAIR.

"VANITAS vanitatum" has rung in the  
cars

Of gentle and simple for thousands of  
years ;

The wail still is heard, yet its notes never  
scare

Either simple or gentle from Vanity  
Fair.

I often hear people abusing it, yet  
There the young go to learn and the old  
to forget ;

The mirth may be feigning, the sheen  
may be glare,

But the gingerbread's gilded in Vanity  
Fair.

Old Dives there rolls in his chariot, but  
mind

*Atra Cura* is up with the lackeys behind ;

Joan trudges with Jack,—are the Sweet-hearts aware

Of the trouble that waits them in Vanity Fair ?

We saw them all go, and we something may learn

Of the harvest they reap when we see them return.

The tree was enticing, its branches are bare,—

Heigho for the promise of Vanity Fair.

That stupid old Dives, once honest enough,

His honesty sold for star, ribbon, and stuff ;

And Joan's pretty face has been clouded with care

Since Jack bought her ribbons at Vanity Fair.

Contemptible Dives ! too credulous Joan !

52 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Yet we all have a Vanity Fair of our  
own ;

My son, you have yours, but you need  
not despair—

I own I've a weakness for Vanity Fair.

Philosophy halts—wise counsels are  
vain,

We go, we repent, we return there  
again ;

To-night you will certainly meet with us  
there—

So come and be merry in Vanity Fair.

185a.

## BRAMBLE-RISE.

*These days were soon the days of yore ;  
Six summers pass, and then  
That musing man would see once more  
The fountain in the glen.*

THE RUSSET PITCHER.

WHAT changes meet my wistful eyes  
In quiet little Bramble-Rise,  
The pride of all the shire ;  
How altered is each pleasant nook ;—  
And used the dumpy church to look  
So dumpy in the spire ?

This village is no longer mine ;  
And though the Inn has changed its  
sign,  
The beer may not be stronger ;  
The river, dwindled by degrees,  
Is now a brook, the cottages  
Are cottages no longer.

54 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

The mud is brick, the thatch is slate,  
The pound has tumbled out of date,  
And all the trees are stunted :  
Surely these thistles once grew figs,  
These geese were swans, and once these  
pigs  
More musically grunted.

Where boys and girls pursued their  
sports  
A locomotive puffs and snorts,  
And gets my malediction ;  
The turf is dust—the elves are fled—  
The ponds have shrunk—and tastes have  
spread  
To photograph and fiction.

Ah, there's a face I know again,  
There's Patty trotting down the lane  
To fill her pail with water ;  
Yes, Patty ! but I fear she's not  
The tricky Pat that used to trot,  
But Patty,—Patty's daughter !

And has she, too, outlived the spells  
Of breezy hills and silent dells

Where childhood loved to ramble ?  
Then life was thornless to our ken,  
And, Bramble-Rise, thy hills were then  
A rise without a bramble.

Whence comes the change ? 'Twere  
    simply told ;  
For some grow wise, and some grow  
    cold,  
And all feel time and trouble :  
If life an empty bubble be,  
How sad for those who cannot see  
    The rainbow in the bubble !

And senseless too, for Madame Fate  
Is not the fickle reprobate  
    That moody sages thought her ;  
My heart leaps up, and I rejoice,  
As falls upon my ear thy voice,  
    My little friskful daughter.

Come hither, fairy, perch on these  
Thy most unworthy father's knees,  
And tell him all about it.  
Are dolls a sham ? Can men be base ?

56 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

When gazing on thy blessed face  
I'm quite prepared to doubt it.

Though life is call'd a doleful jaunt,  
Though earthly joys, the wisest grant,  
Have no enduring basis ;  
It's pleasant in this lower sphere,  
To find with Puss, my daughter dear,  
A little cool oasis !

Oh, may'st thou some day own, sweet  
elf,  
A pet just like thy winsome self,  
Her sanguine thoughts to borrow ;  
Content to use her brighter eyes,  
Accept her childish ecstasies,—  
If need be, share her sorrow.

The wisdom of thy prattle cheers  
This heart ; and when, outworn in years,  
And homeward I am starting,  
Lead me, my darling, gently down  
To life's dim strand : the skies may  
frown,—  
But weep not for our parting.

*April, 1857.*



## OLD LETTERS.

*Have sorrows come? Has pleasure sped?  
Is earthly bliss an empty bubble?  
Is some one dull, or something dead?  
O may I, mayn't I share your trouble?*

*Ay, so it is, and is it fair?  
For men (your elders and your betters!)  
Who can't look pretty in despair,  
Feel quite as sad about their letters.*

HEN LETTERS.

OLD letters! wipe away the tear  
For lines so pale, so vainly worded;  
A Pilgrim finds his journey here  
Since first his youthful loins were  
girded.

Yes, here are wails from Clapham  
Grove;  
How could philosophy expect us  
To live with Dr. Wise, and love  
Rice pudding and the Greek De-  
lectus?

58 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

How strange to commune with the  
Dead !

Dead joys, dead loves ; and wishes  
thwarted :

Here's cruel proof of friendships fled,  
And, sad enough, of friends departed.

Yes, here's the offer that I wrote  
In '33 to Lucy Diver ;  
And here John Wylie's begging note,—  
He never paid me back a stiver.

Here's news from Paternoster Row ;  
How mad I was when first I learnt it !  
They would not take my Book, and now  
I wish to goodness I had burnt it.

A ghastly bill ! "*I disapprove.*"  
And yet She help'd me to defray it :—  
What tokens of a mother's love !  
O bitter thought,—I can't repay it.

And here's a score of notes at last,  
With "*Love*" and "*Dove*," and  
"*Sever, Never*" ;

Though hope, though passion may be  
past,  
Their perfume seems—ah, sweet as  
ever.

A human heart should beat for two,  
Whate'er may say your single scorn-  
ers ;  
And all the hearths I ever knew  
Had got a pair of chimney-corners.

See here a double violet—  
Two locks of hair—A deal of scandal ;  
I'll burn what only brings regret—  
Kitty, go, fetch a lighted candle.

1856.

## MY FIRST-BORN.

*Of a worthless old Bloch she's the dearest of Chifs,  
For what nonsense she talks when she opens her  
lips.*

LITTLE PITCHER.

"HE shan't be their namesake, the  
rather

That both are such opulent men :  
His name shall be that of his father,  
My Benjamin, shorten'd to *Ben*.

"Yes, *Ben*, though it cost him a portion  
In each of my relatives' wills :  
I scorn such baptismal extortion—  
(That creaking of boots must be  
Squills.)

"It is clear, though his means may be  
narrow,  
This infant his Age will adorn ;  
I shall send him to Oxford from Har-  
row,—  
I wonder how soon he'll be born !"

A spouse thus was airing his fancies  
Below, 'twas a labour of love,  
And was calmly reflecting on Nancy's  
More practical labour above ;

Yet while it so pleased him to ponder,  
Elated, at ease, and alone ;  
That pale, patient victim up yonder  
Had budding delights of her own :

Sweet thoughts, in their essence diviner  
Than paltry ambition and pelf ;  
A cherub, no babe will be finer !  
Invented and nursed by herself ;

At breakfast, and dining, and tea-ing,  
An appetite naught can appease,  
And quite a Young-Reasoning-Being  
When call'd on to yawn and to sneeze.

What cares that heart, trusting and  
tender,  
For fame or avuncular wills ?  
Except for the name and the gender,  
She's almost as tranquil as Squills.

**62 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.**

That father, in reverie centred,  
Dumbfounder'd, his thoughts in a  
whirl,  
Heard Squills, as the creaking boots  
enter'd,  
Announce that his Boy was—a Girl.

## THE WIDOW'S MITE.

A WIDOW—she had only one !  
A puny and decrepit son ;  
    But, day and night,  
Though fretful oft, and weak and small,  
A loving child, he was her all—  
    The Widow's Mite.

The Widow's Mite—ay, so sustain'd,  
She battled onward, nor complain'd  
    Tho' friends were fewer :  
And while she toil'd for daily fare,  
A little crutch upon the stair  
    Was music to her.

I saw her then—and now I see  
That, though resign'd and cheerful, she  
    Has sorrow'd much :  
She has, HE gave it tenderly,  
Much faith ; and, carefully laid by,  
    A little crutch.

ST. GEORGE'S, HANOVER  
SQUARE.

*Why little Di should throw me over  
I never knew,—I can't discover,  
Or even guess ;  
Maybe Smith's lyrics she decided  
Were sweeter than the sweetest I did,—  
I acquiesce.*

SHE pass'd up the aisle on the arm of  
her sire,  
A delicate lady in bridal attire,  
Fair emblem of virgin simplicity ;  
Half London was there, and, my word,  
there were few  
That stood by the altar, or hid in a pew,  
But envied Lord Nigel's felicity.

Beautiful Bride !—So meek in thy splendour,  
So frank in thy love, and its trusting  
surrender,  
Departing you leave us the town  
dim !



ST. GEORGE'S, HANOVER SQUARE. 65

May happiness wing to thy bower, unsought,

And may Nigel, esteeming his bliss as he ought,

Prove worthy thy worship,—confound him !

## **A HUMAN SKULL.**

**A HUMAN Skull! I bought it passing  
cheap,  
Indeed 'twas dearer to its first em-  
ployer!  
I thought mortality did well to keep  
Some mute memento of the Old De-  
stroyer.**

**Time was, some may have prized its  
blooming skin;  
Here lips were woo'd, perhaps, in  
transport tender;  
Some may have chuck'd what was a  
dimpled chin,  
And never had my doubt about its  
gender.**

**Did she live yesterday or ages back?  
What colour were the eyes when  
bright and waking?**

---

And were your ringlets fair, or brown,  
or black,  
Poor little head ! that long has done  
with aching ?

It may have held (to shoot some random  
shots)

Thy brains, Eliza Fry ! or Baron  
Byron's ;  
The wits of Nelly Gwynn, or Doctor  
Watts—  
Two quoted bards. Two philanthropic  
sirens.

But this I trust is clearly understood ;  
If man or woman, if adored or hated—  
Whoever own'd this Skull was not so  
good,  
Nor quite so bad as many may have  
stated.

Who love can need no special type of  
Death ;  
Death steals his icy hand where Love  
reposes ;

68 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Alas for love, alas for fleeting breath—  
*Immortelles* bloom with Beauty's bridal  
roses.

O true-love mine, what lines of care are  
these?

The heart still lingers with its golden  
hours,  
But fading tints are on the chestnut-  
trees,  
And where is all that lavish wealth  
of flowers?

The end is near. Life lacks what once  
it gave,

Yet death has promises that call for  
praises;

A very worthless rogue may dig the  
grave,

But hands unseen will dress the turf  
with daisies.

1860.

## TO MY OLD FRIEND POSTUMUS.

(J. G.)

*And, like yon clocks, when twelve shall sound  
To call our souls away,  
Together may our hands be found,  
An earnest that we prize.*

My Friend, our few remaining years  
Are hastening to an end,  
They glide away, and lines are here  
That time can never mend ;  
Thy blameless life avails thee not,—  
My Friend, my dear old Friend !

Death lifts a burthen from the poor,  
And brings the weary rest,  
But oft from earth's green orchard trees  
The canker takes our best—  
The Well-beloved ! she bloom'd, and  
now  
The turf is on her breast.

**70 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.**

**Alas for love ! This peaceful home !  
The darling at my knee !  
My own dear wife ! Thysself, old Friend !  
And must it come to me,  
That any face shall fill my place  
Unknown to them and thee ?**

**Ay, all too vainly are we screen'd  
From peril, day and night ;  
Those awful rapids must be shot,  
Our shallop will be slight ;—  
O pray that then we may descry  
Some cheering beacon-light.**

## LOULOU AND HER CAT.

*I'm nervous too, I hate a cat !  
Extremely so ; but, as for that,  
It is not only cat or rat,  
Or haunted room, or ghostly chat,  
That makes my heart go pit-a-pat.*

GOOD pastry is vended  
In Cité Fadette ;  
*Maison Pons* can make splendid  
*Brioche* and *galette*.

*M'sieu Pons* is so fat that  
He's laid on the shelf ;  
*Madame* had a cat that  
Was fat as herself.

Long hair, soft as satin,  
A musical purr,  
'Gainst the window she'd flatten  
Her delicate fur.

72 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

I drove Lou to see what  
These worthies were at,—  
In rapture, cried she, "What  
An exquisite cat!

"What whiskers! She's purring  
All over. Regale  
Our eyes, *Puss*, by stirring  
Your feathery tail!

"*M'sieu Pons*, will you sell her?"  
"*Ma femme est sortie*,  
Your offer I'll tell her;  
But—will she?" says he.

Yet *Pons* was persuaded  
To part with the prize:  
(Our bargain was aided,  
My Lou, by your eyes!)

From his *legitime* save him,—  
My spouse I prefer,—  
For I warrant *his* gave him  
*Un mauvais quart d'heure*.



I'm giving a pleasant  
Grimalkin to Lou,—  
Ah, *Puss*, what a present  
I'm giving to you!

## THE NYMPH OF THE WELL.

*Whoever shall win you,—a Fan or a Phoebe,  
Of course of all beauty she must be the belle ;  
If at Tunbridge you chance to fall in with a Hobe,  
You will not fall out with a draught from the  
Well!*

SHE smiled as she gave him a draught  
from the springlet,—

O Tunbridge, thy waters are bitter,  
alas!

But love has an ambush in dimple and  
ringlet ;

“ Thy health, pretty maiden ! ” He  
emptied the glass.

He saw, and he loved her, nor cared  
he to quit her ;

The oftener he came there, the  
longer he stay'd ;

Indeed though the spring was exceed-  
ingly bitter,

We found him eternally pledging the  
maid.

A *preux chevalier*, and but lately a  
cripple,

He met with his hurt where a regi-  
ment fell ;

But worse was he wounded when stay-  
ing to tippie

A bumper to " Phoebe, the Nymph  
of the Well."

Some swore he was old, that his laurels  
were faded,

All vow'd she was vastly too nice for  
a nurse ;

But love never looks on the matter as  
they did,—

She took the brave soldier for better  
or worse.

And here is the home of her fondest  
election,

The walls may be worn, but the ivy is  
green ;

And here she has tenderly twined her  
affection

Around a true soldier who bled for  
the Queen.

76 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

See, yonder he sits, where the church-  
bells invite us,

What child is that spelling the epi-  
taphs there ?

'Tis the joy of his age ; and may love  
so requite us,

When time shall have broken, or  
sickness, or care.

And when he is gone, thro' her widow-  
hood lowly

He'll still live as Chivalry's Light to  
her son :

But only on days that are high and are  
holy

She will show him the Cross that her  
hero had won.

So taught, he will rather take after his  
father,

And wear a long sword to our ene-  
mies' loss ;

And some day or other he'll bring to  
his mother

Victoria's gift—the Victoria Cross !

And then will her darling, like all good  
and true ones,

Console and sustain her—the weak  
and the strong—

And some day or other two black eyes  
or blue ones

Will smile on his path as he jour-  
neys along.

## HER QUIET RESTING-PLACE.

*At Susan's name the fancy plays  
With chiming thoughts of early days,  
And hearts unweaving :  
When all too fair our future smiled,  
When she was Mirth's adopted child,  
And I was young.*

\* \* \* \* \*  
*And summer smiles, but summer spells  
Can never charm where sorrow dwells—  
No maiden fair,  
Or sad, or gay, the passer sees,—  
And still the much-loved elder trees  
Throw shadows there.*

HER quiet resting-place is far away ;  
None dwelling there can tell you her  
sad story.

The stones are mute. The stones could  
only say,  
"A humble spirit pass'd away to  
glory."

She loved the murmur of this mighty  
town ;

The lark rejoiced her from its lattice  
prison ;  
A streamlet lulls her now, the bird has  
flown,  
Some dust is waiting there—a soul has  
risen.

No city smoke to stain the heather  
bells ;  
Sigh, gentle winds, around my lone  
love sleeping ;—  
She bore her burthen here, but now she  
dwells  
Where scorner never came, and none  
are weeping.

My name was falter'd with her parting  
breath ;  
These arms were round my darling at  
the latest ;  
All scenes of death are woe, but painful  
death  
In those we dearly love is woe the  
greatest.

80 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

I could not die : HE willed it otherwise ;  
My lot is here, and sorrow, wearing  
older,  
Weighs down the heart, but does not  
fill the eyes,—  
Even my friends may think that I am  
colder.

But when at times I steal away from  
these,  
To find her grave, and pray to be for-  
given,  
And when I watch beside her on my  
knees,  
I think I am a little nearer heaven.

1862.



REPLY TO A LETTER ENCLOSING  
A LOCK OF HAIR.

*She laugh'd—she climb'd the giddy height ;—  
I held that climber small ;  
I even held her rather tight,  
For fear that she should fall.  
A dozen girls were chirping round,  
Like five-and-twenty linnets ;—  
I must have held her, I'll be bound,  
Some five-and-twenty minutes.*

YES, you were false, and, if I'm free,  
I still would be the slave of yore ;  
Then, join'd, our years were thirty-three,  
And now,—yes, now I'm thirty-four.  
And though you were not learn'd—well,  
I was not anxious you should grow  
so ;—

I trembled once beneath her spell  
Whose spelling was extremely so-so.

Bright season ! why will Memory  
Still haunt the path our rambles  
took,—

82 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

The sparrow's nest that made you cry,  
The lilies captured in the brook ?  
I'd lifted you from side to side,  
    (You seem'd as light as that poor  
        sparrow ;) )  
I know who wish'd it twice as wide,  
I think *you* thought it rather narrow.

Time was, indeed a little while,  
My pony could your heart compel ;  
And once, beside the meadow-stile,  
I thought you loved me just as well ;  
I'd kiss'd your cheek ; in sweet surprise  
Your troubled gaze said plainly,  
    " Should he ? "   
But doubt soon fled those daisy eyes,—  
    " He could not mean to vex me, could  
        he ? "

The brightest eyes are soonest sad,  
But your rose cheek, so lightly sway'd,  
Could ripple into dimples glad ;  
For oh, fair friend, what mirth we  
    made !  
The brightest tears are soonest dried,

But your young love and dote were  
stable ;  
You wept when dear old Rover died,  
You wept—and dress'd your dolls in  
sable.

As year succeeds to year, the more  
Imperfect life's fruition seems ;  
Our dreams, as baseless as of yore,  
Are not the same enchanting dreams.  
The girls I love now vote me slow—  
How dull the boys who once seem'd  
witty !  
Perhaps I'm growing old, I know  
I'm still romantic, more's the pity.

Vain the regret—to few, perchance,  
Unknown, and profitless to all :  
The wisely-gay, as years advance,  
Are gaily-wise. Whate'er befall,  
We'll laugh at folly, whether seen  
Under a chimney or a steeple ;  
At yours, at mine — our own, I  
mean,  
As well as that of other people.

84 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

I'm fond of fun, the mental dew  
Where wit, and truth, and ruth are  
blent ;  
And yet I've known a prig or two,  
Who, wanting all, were all content !  
To say I hate such dismal men  
Might be esteem'd a strong assertion ;  
If I've blue devils, now and then,  
I make them dance for my diversion.

And here's your letter debonair—  
“ *My friend, my dear old friend of  
yore,*”  
And is this curl your daughter's hair ?  
I've seen the Titian tint before.  
Are we the pair that used to pass  
Long days beneath the chestnut  
shady ?  
Then you were such a pretty lass—  
I'm told you're now as fair a lady.

I've laugh'd to hide the tear I shed,  
As when the Jester's bosom swells,  
And mournfully he shakes his head,  
We hear the jingle of his bells.

A jesting vein your poet vex'd,  
 And this poor rhyme, the Fates de-  
 termine,  
 Without a parson or a text,  
 Has proved a rather prosy sermon.

1859.

## THE BEAR PIT.

### IN THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

*It seems that poor Bruin has never had peace  
'Twist bald men in Bethel, and wise men in grease.*

OLD ADAGE.

WE liked the bear's serio-comical face,  
As he loll'd with a lazy, a lumbering  
grace ;  
Said Slyboots to me (just as if *she* had  
none),  
"Papa, let's give Bruin a bit of your  
bun."

Says I, "A plum bun might please wist-  
ful old Bruin,  
He can't eat the stone that the cruel  
boy threw in ;  
Stick *yours* on the point of mamma's  
parasol,  
And then he will climb to the top of the  
pole.

"Some bears have got two légs, and  
some have got more,  
Be good to old bears if they've no légs  
or four ;  
Of duty to age you should never be  
carcless,—  
My dear, I am bald, and I soon may be  
hairless !

"The gravest aversion exists among  
bears  
From rude forward persons who give  
themselves airs,—  
We know how some graceless young  
people were maul'd  
For plaguing a Prophet, and calling him  
*bald.*

"Strange ursine devotion ! Their dan-  
cing-days ended,  
Bears die to 'remove' what, in life,  
they defended :  
They succour'd the Prophet, and, since  
that affair,  
The bald have a painful regard for the  
bear."

88 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

MY MORAL—Small people may read it,  
and run.

(The child has my moral,—the bear has  
my bun.)



## MY NEIGHBOUR ROSE.

*And knives and wenches, less ado,  
My neighbour is astir :  
By cockke and pie she lutes it too  
Behynde the silver fir !*

THOUGH walls but thin our hearths  
divide,

We're strangers, dwelling side by side ;  
How gaily all your days must glide  
Unvex'd by labour.

I've seen you weep, and could have  
wept ;

I've heard you sing, (and might have  
slept !)

Sometimes I hear your chimney swept,  
My charming neighbour !

Your pets are mine. Pray what may  
ail

The pup, once eloquent of tail ?  
I wonder why your nightingale

90 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Is mute at sunset.  
Your puss, demure and pensive, seems  
Too fat to mouse. Much she esteems  
Yon sunny wall, and, dozing, dreams  
Of mice she once ate.

Our tastes agree. I dote upon  
Frail jars, turquoise and celadon,  
The *Wedding March* of Mendelssohn,  
And *Penseroso*.

When sorely tempted to purloin  
Your *pietà* of Marc Antoine,  
Fair virtue doth fair play enjoin,  
Fair Virtuoso!

At times an Ariel, cruel-kind,  
Will kiss my lips, and stir your blind,  
And whisper low, "She hides behind;  
Thou art not lonely."

The tricky sprite would erst assist  
At hush'd Verona's moonlight tryst;—  
Sweet Capulet, thou wert not kiss'd  
By light winds only.

I miss the simple days of yore,  
When two long braids of hair you wore,

And *chat botté* was wonder'd o'er,  
 In corner cosy.  
 But gaze not back for tales like those :  
 It's all in order, I suppose ;  
 The Bud is now a blooming ROSE,—  
 A rosy-posy !

Indeed, farewell to bygone years ;  
 How wonderful the change appears ;  
 For curates now, and cavaliers,  
 In turn perplex you :  
 The last are birds of feather gay,  
 Who swear the first are birds of prey ;  
 I'd scare them all had I my way,  
 But that might vex you.

Sometimes I've envied, it is true,  
 That hero, joyous twenty-two,  
 Who sent *bouquets* and *billets doux*,  
 And wore a sabre.  
 The rogue ! how close his arm he  
 wound  
 About her waist, who never frown'd.  
 He loves you, Child. Now, is he bound  
 To love *my* neighbour ?

92 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

The bells are ringing. As is meet  
White favours fascinate the street,  
Sweet faces greet me, rueful-sweet  
    'Twixt tears and laughter :  
They crowd the door to see her go,  
The bliss of one brings many woe ;  
Oh, kiss the bride, and I will throw  
    The old shoe after.

What change in one short afternoon,  
My own dear neighbour gone,—so soon !  
Is yon pale orb her honey-moon  
    Slow rising hither ?  
O Lady, wan and marvellous !  
How oft have we held commune thus ;  
Sweet memory shall dwell with us,—  
    And joy go with her.

1861.

## THE OLD OAK-TREE AT HAT- FIELD BROADOAK.

*What! Tell you that tale! Come, a tale with a  
sting  
Would be rather too much of an excellent thing!  
I can't point a moral, or sing you the song,  
My Years are too short—and your Kars are too  
long.*

LITTLE PITCHER.

A MIGHTY growth! The county side  
Lamented when the Giant died,  
For England loves her trees:  
What misty legends round him cling;  
How lavishly he once could fling  
His acorns to the breeze!

Who struck a thousand roots in fame,  
Who gave the district half its name,  
Will not be soon forgotten:  
Last spring he show'd but one green  
bough,  
The red leaves hang there yet,—and  
now  
His very props are rotten!

94 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Elate, the thunderbolt he braved,  
For centuries his branches waved  
    A welcome to the blast ;  
From reign to reign he bore a spell ;  
No forester had dared to fell  
    What time has fell'd at last.

The Monarch wore a leafy crown,—  
And wolves, ere wolves were hunted  
    down,  
    Found shelter in his gloom ;  
Unnumber'd squirrels frolick'd free,  
Glad music fill'd the gallant Tree  
    From stem to topmost bloom.

It's hard to say, 'twere vain to seek,  
When first he ventured forth, a meek  
    Petitioner for dew ;  
No Saxon spade disturb'd his root,  
The rabbit spared the tender shoot,  
    And valiantly he grew,

And show'd some inches from the ground  
When St. Augustine came and found  
    Us very proper Vandals :

Then nymphs had bluer eyes than hose.  
England then measured men by blows,  
And measured time by candles.

The pilgrim bless'd his grateful shade  
Ere Richard led the first crusade ;  
And maidens loved to dance  
Where, boy and man, in summer-time,  
Chaucer once ponder'd o'er his rhyme ;  
And Robin Hood, perchance,

Stole hither to Maid Marian ;  
(And if they did not come, one can  
At any rate suppose it) ;  
They met beneath the mistletoe,—  
We've done the same, and ought to know  
The reason why they chose it !

And this was call'd the *Traitor's*  
*Branch*,  
Guy Warwick hung six yemen stanch  
Along its mighty fork ;  
Uncivil wars for them ! The fair  
Red rose and white still bloom, but  
where  
Are Lancaster and York ?

96 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Right mournfully his leaves he shed  
To shroud the graves of England's dead,  
By English falchion slain ;  
And cheerfully, for England's sake,  
He sent his kin to sea with Drake,  
When Tudor humbled Spain.

While Blake was fighting with the Dutch  
They gave his poor old arms a crutch ;  
And thrice four maids and men ate  
A meal within his rugged bark,  
When Coventry bewitch'd the Park,  
And Chatham swayed the Senate.

His few remaining boughs were green,  
And dappled sunbeams danced between  
Upon the dappled deer,  
When, clad in black, two mourners met  
To read the Waterloo Gazette,—  
They mourn'd their darling here.

They join'd their boy. The tree at last  
Lies prone, discoursing of the past,  
Some fancy-dreams awaking ;  
At rest, though headlong changes come,



Though nations arm to roll of drum,  
And dynasties are quaking.

Romantic spot ! By honest pride  
Of old tradition sanctified ;  
My pensive vigil keeping,  
Thy beauty moves me like a spell,  
And thoughts, and tender thoughts, up-  
well,  
That fill my heart to weeping.

• • • • •

The Squire affirms with gravest look,  
His Oak goes up to Domesday Book :  
And some say even higher !  
We rode last week to see the Ruin,  
We love the fair domain it grew in,  
And well we love the Squire.

A nature loyally controlled,  
And fashion'd in that righteous mould  
Of English gentleman ;  
My child some day will read these  
rhymes,  
She loved her " godpapa " betimes,—  
The little Christian !

98 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

I love the Past, its ripe pleasance,  
And lusty thought, and dim romance,—  
    Its heart-compelling ditties ;  
But more, these ties, in mercy sent,  
With faith and true affection blent,  
And, wanting them, I were content  
    To murmur, "*Nunc dimittis.*"

HALLINGBURY: *April, 1859.*

## TO MY GRANDMOTHER.

(SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE BY MR.  
ROMNEY.)

*Under the elm a rustic seat  
Was merriest Susan's pet retreat  
To merry make.*

THIS relative of mine,  
Was she seventy-and-nine  
When she died?  
By the canvas may be seen  
How she look'd at seventeen,  
As a bride.

Beneath a summer tree,  
Her maiden reverie  
Has a charm ;  
Her ringlets are in taste ;  
What an arm ! . . what a waist  
For an arm !

100 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

With her bridal-wreath, bouquet,  
Lace farthingale, and gay

*Falbala,—*

Were Romney's limning true,  
What a lucky dog were you,  
Grandpapa !

Her lips are sweet as love ;  
They are parting ! Do they move ?  
Are they dumb ?  
Her eyes are blue, and beam  
Beseechingly, and seem  
To say, " Come ! "

What funny fancy slips  
From atween these cherry lips ?  
Whisper me,  
Sweet sorceress in paint,  
What canon says I mayn't  
Marry thee ?

That good-for-nothing Time  
Has a confidence sublime !  
When I first  
Saw this lady, in my youth,

Her winters had, forsooth,  
Done their worst.

Her locks, as white as snow,  
Once shamed the swarthy crow :  
By-and-by  
That fowl's avenging sprite  
Set his cruel foot for spite  
Near her eye.

Her rounded form was lean,  
And her silk was bombazine :  
Well I wot  
With her needles would she sit,  
And for hours would she knit,—  
Would she not ?

Ah, perishable clay ;  
Her charms had dropt away  
One by one :  
But if she heaved a sigh  
With a burthen, it was, " Thy  
Will be done."

In travail, as in tears,  
With the fardel of her years

102 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Overprest,  
In mercy she was borne  
Where the weary and the worn  
Are at rest.

O, if you now are there,  
And sweet as once you were,  
Grandmamma,  
This nether world agrees  
'Twill all the better please  
Grandpapa.

## THE SKELETON IN THE CUP- BOARD.

*The most forlorn—what worms we are !  
Would wish to finish this cigar  
Before departing.*

THE characters of great and small  
Come ready made, we can't bespeak  
one ;

Their sides are many, too,—and all  
(Except ourselves) have got a weak  
one.

Some sanguine people love for life,  
Some love their hobby till it flings  
them.—

How many love a pretty wife  
For love of the *éclat* she brings them !

A little to relieve my mind  
I've thrown off this disjointed chatter,  
But more because I'm disinclined  
To enter on a painful matter :

104 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Once I was bashful ; I'll allow  
I've blush'd for words untimely  
spoken ;  
I still am rather shy, and now . . .  
And now the ice is fairly broken.

We all have secrets : you have one  
Which mayn't be quite your charm-  
ing spouse's ;  
We all lock up a skeleton  
In some grim chamber of our houses ;  
Familiars who exhaust their days  
And nights in probing where our  
smart is—  
And who, excepting spiteful ways,  
Are " silent, unassuming *parties*."

We hug this phantom we detest,  
Rarely we let it cross our portals :  
It is a most exacting guest,—  
Now, are we not afflicted mortals ?  
Your neighbour Gay, that jovial wight,  
As Dives rich, and brave as Hector—  
Poor Gay steals twenty times a night,  
On shaking knees, to see his spectre.



Old Dives fears a pauper fate,  
So hoarding in his ruling passion ;—  
Some gloomy souls anticipate  
A waistcoat, straiter than the fashion !—  
She childless pines, that lonely wife,  
And secret tears are bitter shedding ;—  
Hector may tremble all his life,  
And die,—but not of that he's dreading.

Ah me, the World ! How fast it spins !  
The beldams dance, the caldron bubbles ;  
They shriek,—they stir it for our sins,  
And we must drain it for our troubles.  
We toil, we groan ;—the cry for love  
Mounts up from this poor seething city,  
And yet I know we have above  
A FATHER, infinite in pity.

When Beauty smiles, when Sorrow weeps,

**106 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.**

Where sunbeams play, where shadows  
darken,  
One inmate of our dwelling keeps  
Its ghastly carnival ;—but hearken !  
How dry the rattle of the bones !  
That sound was not to make you start  
meant :  
Stand by ! Your humble servant owns  
The Tenant of this Dark Apartment.

## ON AN OLD MUFF.

*He cannot be complete in aught  
Who is not humorously prone,—  
A man without a merry thought  
Can hardly have a funny bone.*

TIME has a magic wand !  
What is this meets my hand,  
Moth-eaten, mouldy, and  
Cover'd with fluff ?  
Faded, and stiff, and scant ;  
Can it be ? no, it can't—  
Yes, I declare, it's Aunt  
Prudence's Muff !

Years ago, twenty-three,  
Old Uncle Doubledee  
Gave it to Aunty P.  
Laughing and teasing—  
“ Pru., of the breezy curls,  
Whisper those solemn churls,  
*What holds a pretty girl's  
Hand without squeezing ? ”*

Uncle was then a lad  
Gay, but, I grieve to add,  
Sinful ; if smoking bad

*Baccy's* vice :

Glossy was then this mink  
Muff, lined with pretty pink  
Satin, which maidens think  
" Awfully nice ! "

I seem to see again  
Aunt in her hood and train,  
Glide, with a sweet disdain,  
Gravely to Meeting :  
Psalm-book, and kerchief new,  
Peep'd from the Muff of Pru. ;  
Young men, and pious too,  
Giving her greeting.

Sweetly her Sabbath sped  
Then ; from this Muff, it's said,  
Tracts she distributed :—

Converts (till Monday !)  
Lured by the grace they lack'd,  
Follow'd her. One, in fact,  
Ask'd for—and got his tract  
Twice of a Sunday !

Love has a potent spell ;  
Soon this bold *N'er-do-well*,  
Aunt's too susceptible  
    Heart undermining,  
Slipt, so the scandal runs,  
Notes in the pretty nun's  
Muff, triple-corner'd ones,  
    Pink as its lining.

Worse follow'd, soon the jade  
Fled (to oblige her blade !)  
Whilst her friends thought that they'd  
    Lock'd her up tightly :  
After such shocking games  
Aunt is of wedded dames  
Gayest, and now her name's  
    Mrs. Golightly.

In female conduct flaw  
Sadder I never saw,  
Faith still I've in the law  
    Of compensation.  
Once Uncle went astray,  
Smoked, joked, and swore away,  
Sworn by he's now, by a  
    Large congregation.

110 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Changed is the Child of Sin,  
Now he's (he once was thin)  
Grave, with a double chin,—

Blest be his fat form !

Changed is the garb he wore,  
Preacher was never more  
Prized than is Uncle for  
Pulpit or platform.

If all's as best befits  
Mortals of slender wits,  
Then beg this Muff and its

Fair Owner pardon :

*All's for the best*, indeed  
Such is My simple creed ;  
Still I must go and weed  
Hard in my garden.

1863.

## AN INVITATION TO ROME, AND THE REPLY.

### THE INVITATION.

OH, come to Rome, it is a pleasant  
place,

Your London sun is here, and smiling  
brightly ;

The Briton, too, puts on his cheery face,  
And Mrs. Bull acquits herself politely.

The Romans are an easy-going race,  
With simple wives more dignified  
than sprightly ;

I see them at their doors, as day is  
closing,

Prouder than duchesses, and more im-  
posing.

A sweet *far niente* life promotes the  
graces ;

---

112 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

They pass from dreamy bliss to wake-  
ful glee,  
And in their bearing and their speech,  
one traces  
A breadth, a depth—a grace of cour-  
tesy  
Not found in busy or inclement places ;  
Their clime and tongue are much in  
harmony :—  
The Cockney met in Middlesex or Surrey,  
Is often cold, and always in a hurry.

Oh, come to Rome, nor be content to  
read  
Of famous palace and of stately street  
Whose fountains ever run with joyful  
speed,  
And never-ceasing murmur. Here  
we greet  
Memnon's vast monolith ; or, gay with  
weed,  
Rich capitals, as corner-stone, or seat,  
The site of vanish'd temples, where now  
moulder  
Old ruins, masking ruin even older.



Ay, come, and see the statues, pictures,  
churches,

Although the last are commonplace,  
or florid.—

Who say 'tis here that superstition  
perches ?

Myself, I'm glad the marbles have  
been quarried.

The sombre streets are worthy your re-  
searches :

The ways are foul, the lava pavement's  
horrid,

But pleasant sights that squeamishness  
disparages,

Are miss'd by all who roll about in car-  
riages.

I dare not speak of Michael Angelo,

Such theme were all too splendid for  
my pen :

And if I breathe the name of Sanzio

(The brightest of Italian gentlemen,)

Is it that love casts out my fear, and so

I claim with him a kindredship ? Ah,  
when

114 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

We love, the name is on our hearts en-  
graven,  
As is thy name, my own dear Bard of  
Avon.

Nor is the Coliseum theme of mine,  
'Twas built for poet of a larger daring ;  
The world goes there with torches ; I  
decline

Thus to affront the moonbeams with  
their flaring.

Some time in May our forces we'll com-  
bine

(Just you and I), and try a midnight  
airing.

And then I'll quote this rhyme to you—  
and then

You'll muse upon the vanity of men !

Come ! We will charter such a pair of  
nags !

The country's better seen when one is  
riding :

We'll roam where yellow Tiber speeds  
or lags

At will. The aqueducts are yet be-  
striding  
With giant march (now whole, now bro-  
ken crags  
With flowers plumed) the swelling  
and subsiding  
Campagna, girt by purple hills afar,  
That melt in light beneath the evening  
star.

A drive to Palestrina will be pleas-  
ant ;

The wild fig grows where erst her  
rampart stood ;  
There oft, in goat-skin clad, a sunburnt  
peasant

Like Pan comes frisking from his ilex  
wood,  
And seems to wake the past time in the  
present.

Fair *contadina*, mark his mirthful  
mood,  
No antique satyr he. The nimble fel-  
low  
Can join with jollity your *saltarello*.

116 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Old sylvan peace and liberty! The  
breath

Of life to unsophisticated man.

Here Mirth may pipe, Love here may  
weave his wreath,

"*Per dar' al mio bene.*" When you  
can,

Come share their leafy solitudes. Pale  
Death

And Time are grudging of our little  
span :

Wan Time speeds lightly o'er the  
changing corn,

Death grins from yonder cynical old  
thorn.

Oh, come! I send a leaf of April  
fern,

It grew where beauty lingers round  
decay :

Ashes long buried in a sculptured urn  
Are not more dead than Rome—so  
dead to-day!

That better time, for which the patriots  
yearn,

Delights the gaze, again to fade away.

They wait, they pine for what is long  
denied,  
And thus I wait till thou art by my side.

Thou'rt far away! Yet, while I write, I  
still

Seem gently, Sweet, to clasp thy  
hand in mine ;

I cannot bring myself to drop the quill,  
I cannot yet thy little hand resign !

The plain is fading into darkness chill,  
The Sabine peaks are flushed with  
light divine,

I watch alone, my fond thought wings  
to thee ;

Oh, come to Rome. Oh come,—oh  
come to me !

1863.

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## THE REPLY.

Dear Exile, I was proud to get  
Your rhyme, I've laid it up in cotton ;  
You know that you are all to " Pet,"—  
She fear'd that she was quite forgotten.

118 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Mamma, who scolds me when I mope,  
Insists, and she is wise as gentle,  
That I am still in love ! I hope  
That you feel rather sentimental !

Perhaps you think your *Love forlorn*  
Should pine unless her slave be with  
her.

Of course you're fond of Rome, and  
more—

Of course you'd like to coax me  
thither !

*Che !* quit this dear, delightful maze  
Of calls and balls, to be intensely  
Discomfited in fifty ways—  
I like your confidence, immensely !

Some girls who love to ride and race,  
And live for dancing, like the Bruens,  
Confess that Rome's a charming place—  
In spite of all the stupid ruins !

I think it might be sweet to pitch  
One's tent beside those banks of  
Tiber,

And all that sort of thing, of which

Dear Hawthorne's "quite" the best  
describer.

To see stone pines and marble gods  
In garden alleys red with roses ;—  
The Perch where Pio Nono nods ;—  
The Church where Raphael reposes.  
Make pleasant *giros*—when we may ;  
Jump *stagionate* (where they're easy !)   
And play croquet ; the Bruens say  
There's turf behind the Ludovici !

I'll bring my books, though Mrs. Mee  
Says packing books is such a worry ;  
I'll bring my *Golden Treasury*,  
Manzoni, and, of course, a "Mur-  
ray !"

Your verses (if you so advise !)  
A Dante—Auntie owns a quarto ;  
I'll try and buy a smaller size,  
And read him on the *muro torto*.

But can I go ? *La Madre* thinks  
It would be such an undertaking !  
(I wish we could consult a sphinx !)

120 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

The thought alone has left her quaking !  
Papa (we do not mind papa)  
Has got some "notice" of some  
"motion,"  
And could not stay ; but, why not,—ah,  
I've not the very slightest notion !

The Browns have come to stay a week—  
They've brought the boys—I haven't  
thank'd 'em ;  
For Baby *Grand*, and Baby *Pic*,  
Are playing cricket in my sanctum !  
Your Rover, too, affects my den,  
And when I pat the dear old whelp,  
it . . .  
It makes me think of *You*, and then . . .  
And then I cry—I cannot help it.

Ah yes, before you left me, ere  
Our separation was impending,  
These eyes had seldom shed a tear,—  
I thought my joy could have no ending !  
But cloudlets gather'd soon, and this—



This was the first that rose to grieve  
me—

To know that I possess'd the bliss,—  
For then I knew such bliss might  
leave me!

My strain is sad, but, oh, believe  
Your words have made my spirit  
better;

And if, perhaps, at times I grieve,  
I'd meant to write a cheery letter;  
But skies were dull; Rome sounded hot,  
I fancied I could live without it:  
I thought I'd go, I thought I'd not,  
And then I thought I'd think about it.

The sun now glances o'er the Park,  
If tears are on my cheek, they glitter,  
I think I've kissed your rhyme, for hark,  
My "bulley" gives a saucy twitter!  
Your blessed words extinguish doubt,  
A sudden breeze is gaily blowing,—  
And Hark! The minster bells ring out—  
*She ought to go. Of course she's  
going!*

1863.

## GERALDINE.

*She will not need the Shepherd's crook,  
Her griefs are only passing shadow;  
She'll dash beside the purest brook,  
And nibble in the greenest meadow.*

A SIMPLE child has claims  
On your sentiment, her name's  
Geraldine.

Be tender, but beware,  
She's frolicsome as fair,—  
And fifteen.

She has gifts to grace allied,  
And each she has applied,  
And improved :  
She has bliss that lives and leans  
On loving,—ah, that means  
She is loved.

Her beauty is refined  
By sweet harmony of mind,

And the art,  
And the blessed nature, too,  
Of a tender, of a true  
Little heart.

And yet I must not vault  
Over any foolish fault  
That she owns ;  
Or others might rebel,  
And enviously swell  
In their zones.

For she's tricky as the fays,  
Or her pussy when it plays  
With a string :  
She's a goose about her cat,  
Her ribbons, and all that  
Sort of thing.

These foibles are a blot,  
Still she never can do what  
Is not *nice* ;  
Such as quarrel, and give slaps—  
As I've known her get, perhaps,  
Once or twice.

124 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

The spells that draw her soul  
Are subtle—sad or droll :

She can show  
That virtuoso whim  
Which consecrates our dim  
Long-ago.

A love that is not sham  
For Stothard, Blake, and Lamb ;  
And I've known  
Cordelia's sad eyes  
Cause angel-tears to rise  
In her own.

Her gentle spirit yearns  
When she reads of Robin Burns ;—  
Luckless Bard,  
Had she blossom'd in thy time,  
Oh, how rare had been the rhyme  
—And reward !

Thrice happy then is he  
Who, planting such a Tree,  
Sees it bloom  
To shelter him ; indeed

We have joyance as we speed  
To our doom !

I am happy, having grown  
Such a Sapling of my own ;  
And I crave  
No garland for my brows,  
But rest beneath its boughs  
To the grave.

1864.

## THE HOUSEMAID.

*The poor can love through toil and pain,  
Although their homely speech is vain  
To halt in fetters :  
They feel as much, and do far more  
Than some of those they bow before,  
Miscall'd their betters.*

WISTFUL she stands—and yet resign'd  
She watches by the window-blind :  
Poor girl. No doubt  
The pilgrims here despise thy lot :  
Thou canst not stir, because 'tis not  
Thy *Sunday out*.

To play a game of hide and seek  
With dust and cobweb all the week  
Small pleasure yields :  
Oh dear, how nice it is to drop  
One's pen and ink—one's pail and mop :  
And scour the fields.

Poor Bodies few such pleasures know ;  
Seldom they come. How soon they go !

But Souls can roam ;  
For lapt in visions airy-sweet,  
She sees in this unlovely street  
Her far-off home.

The street is now no street ! She pranks  
A purling brook with thymy banks.  
In fancy's realm  
Yon post supports no lamp, aloof  
It spreads above her parents' roof,—  
A gracious elm.

A father's aid, a mother's care,  
And life for her was happy there :  
Yet here, in thrall  
She sits, and dreams, and fondly  
dreams,  
And fondly smiles on one who seems  
More dear than all.

Her dwelling-place I can't disclose !  
Suppose her fair, her name suppose  
Is *Car*, or *Kitty* ;  
She may be *Jane* — she might be  
plain—

For must the subject of my strain  
Be always pretty ?

*Oft on a cloudless afternoon  
Of budding May and leafy June,  
Fit Sunday weather,  
I pass thy window by design,  
And wish thy Sunday out and mine  
Might fall together.*

*For sweet it were thy lot to dower  
With one brief joy : a white-robed flower  
That prude or preacher  
Hardly could deem it were unmeet  
To lay on thy poor path, thou sweet,  
Forlorn, young creature.*

But if her thought on wooing run  
And if her Sunday-swain is one  
Who's fond of strolling,  
She'd like my nonsense less than his  
And so it's better as it is—  
And that's consoling.



## THE JESTER'S PLEA.

These verses were published in 1862, in a volume of Poems (by several hands), entitled "An Offering to Lancashire."

THE world's a sorry wench, akin  
To all that's frail and frightful :  
The world's as ugly, ay, as sin,—  
And almost as delightful !  
The world's a merry world (*pro tem.*),  
And some are gay, and therefore  
It pleases them, but some condemn  
The world they do not care for.

The world's an ugly world. Offend  
Good people, how they wrangle !  
Their manners that they never mend,—  
The characters they mangle !  
They eat, and drink, and scheme, and  
plod,—  
They go to church on Sunday ;

130 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

And many are afraid of God—  
And more of *Mrs. Grundy*.

The time for pen and sword was when  
"My ladye fayre" for pity  
Could tend her wounded knight, and  
then

Be tender to his ditty.  
Some ladies now make pretty songs,  
And some make pretty nurses :  
Some men are great at righting wrongs,  
And some at writing verses.

I wish we better understood  
The tax our poets levy ;  
I know the Muse is *goody good*,  
I think she's rather heavy :  
Now she compounds for winning ways  
By morals of the sternest ;  
Methinks the lays of nowadays  
Are painfully in earnest.

When wisdom halts, I humbly try  
To make the most of folly :  
If Pallas be unwilling, I

Prefer to flirt with Polly ;  
To quit the goddess for the maid  
Seems low in lofty musers ;  
But Pallas is a lofty jade—  
And beggars can't be choosers.

I do not wish to see the slaves  
Of party stirring passion,  
Or psalms quite superseding staves  
Or piety " the fashion."  
I bless the Hearts where pity glows,  
Who, here together banded,  
Are holding out a hand to those  
That wait so empty-handed !

Masters, may one in motley clad,  
A Jester by confession,  
Scarce noticed join, half gay, half sad,  
The close of your procession ?  
This garment here seems out of place  
With graver robes to mingle,  
But if one tear bedews his face,  
Forgive the bells their jingle.

## TO MY MISTRESS.

*His musings were trite, and their burden, forsooth,  
The wisdom of age and the folly of youth.*

COUNTESS, I see the flying year,  
And feel how Time is wasting here :  
Ay more, he soon his worst will do,  
And garner all Your roses too.

It pleases Time to fold his wings  
Around our best and fairest things ;  
He'll mar your blooming cheek, as now  
He stamps his mark upon my brow.

The same mute planets rise and shine  
To rule your days and nights as mine :  
Once I was young and gay, and  
see ! . . .

What I am now you soon will be.

And yet I boast a certain charm  
That shields me from your worst alarm ;

And bids me gaze, with front sublime,  
On all these ravages of Time.

You boast a gift to charm the eyes,  
I boast a gift that Time defies :  
For mine will still be mine, and last  
When all your pride of beauty's past.

My gift may long embalm the lures  
Of eyes—ah, sweet to me as yours :  
For ages hence the great and good  
Will judge you as I choose they should.

In days to come the peer or clown,  
With whom I still shall win renown,  
Will only know that you were fair  
Because I chanced to say you were

Proud Lady! Scornful beauty mocks  
At aged heads and silver locks ;  
But think awhile before you fly,  
Or spurn a poet such as I.

KENWOOD : *July 21, 1864.*

## MY MISTRESS'S BOOTS.

*She has dancing eyes and ruby lips,  
Delightful boots—and away she skips.*

THEY nearly strike me dumb,—  
I tremble when they come

Pit-a-pat :

This palpitation means  
These boots are Geraldine's—  
Think of that !

O, where did hunter win  
So delicate a skin

For her feet ?

You lucky little kid,  
You perish'd, so you did,  
For my sweet.

The faery stitching gleams  
On the sides, and in the seams,  
And it shows

The Pixies were the wags  
Who tipt these funny tags,  
And these toes.

What soles to charm an elf !  
Had Crusoc, sick of self,  
Chanced to view  
One printed near the tide,  
O, how hard he would have tried  
For the two !

For Gerry's debonair,  
And innocent and fair  
As a rose ;  
She's an angel in a frock,  
With a fascinating cock  
To her nose.

The simpletons who squeeze  
Their extremities to please  
Mandarins,  
Would positively flinch  
From venturing to pinch  
Geraldine's.

136 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Cinderalla's *lefts and rights*  
To Geraldine's were frights :

And I trow,  
The damsel, deftly shod,  
Has dutifully trod  
Until now.

Come, Gerry, since it suits  
Such a pretty Puss (in Boots)  
These to don,  
Set this dainty hand awhile  
On my shoulder, dear, and I'll  
Put them on.

ALBURY, *June 29, 1864.*



## THE ROSE AND THE RING.

(Christmas, 1854, and Christmas, 1863.)

SHE smiles, but her heart is in sable,  
Ay, sad as her Christmas is chill ;  
She reads, and her book is the fable  
He penn'd for her while she was ill.  
It is nine years ago since he wrought it,  
Where reedy old Tiber is king ;  
And chapter by chapter he brought it,  
And read her the Rose and the Ring.

And when it was printed, and gaining  
Renown with all lovers of glce,  
He sent her this copy containing  
His comical little *croquis*;  
A sketch of a rather droll couple—  
She's pretty, he's quite t'other thing !  
He begs (with a spine vastly supple)  
She will study the Rose and the Ring.

138 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

It pleased the kind Wizard to send her  
The last and the best of his toys ;  
He aye had a sentiment tender  
For innocent maidens and boys ;  
And though he was great as a scorner,  
The guileless were safe from his  
sting :—

How sad is past mirth to the mourner—  
A tear on the Rose and the Ring !

She reads ; I may vainly endeavour  
Her mirth-chequer'd grief to pursue,  
For she knows she has lost, and for ever,  
The heart that was bared to so few ;  
But here, on the shrine of his glory,  
One poor little blossom I fling ;  
And you see there's a nice little story  
Attach'd to the Rose and the Ring.

1864.

## NUPTIAL VERSES.

THE town despises new world lays :

The foolish town is frantic

For story-books that tell of days

Which time has made romantic ;

Of days, whose chiefest glories fill

The gloom of crypt and barrow ;

When soldiers were, as Love is still,

Content with bow and arrow.

But why should we the fancy chide ?

The world will always hunger

To know how people lived and died

When all the world was younger.

We like to read of knightly parts.

In maidenhood's distresses,

Of tryst, with sunshine in light hearts,

And moonbeam on dark tresses ;

And how, when *errante-knyghte* or *erl*

Proved well the love he gave her,

140 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

She'd send him scarf or silken curl,  
As earnest of her favour ;  
And how (the Fair at times were rude !)  
Her knight, ere homeward riding,  
Would take, and, ay with gratitude,  
His lady's silver chiding.

We love the rare old days and rich  
That poetry has painted ;  
We mourn that sacred age with which  
We never were acquainted.  
Absurd ! our modern world's divine,  
A world to dare and do in,  
A more romantic world. In fine  
A better world to woo in !

The flow of life is yet a rill  
That laughs, and leaps, and glistens ;  
And still the woodland rings, and still  
The old Damœtas listens.  
Romance, as tender as she's true,  
Our Isle has never quitted :  
So, LAD and LASSIE, when you woo,  
You hardly need be pitied.

Our lot is cast on pleasant days,  
 In not unpleasant places ;  
 Young ladies now have pretty ways,  
 As well as pretty faces ;  
 So never sigh for what has been,  
 And let us cease complaining  
 That we have loved when our dear  
 Queen  
 VICTORIA was reigning.

Oh yes, young love is lovely yet,  
 With faith and honour plighted :  
 I love to see a pair so met,  
 Youth—Beauty—all united.  
 Such dear ones may they ever wear  
 The roses fortune gave them:  
 Ah, know we such a BLESSED PAIR ?  
 I think we do ! GOD SAVE THEM !

MRS. SMITH.

*Heigh ho ! they're wed. The cards are dealt,  
Our frolic games are o'er ;  
I've laugh'd, and foot'd, and loved. I've felt—  
As I shall feel no more ;  
Yon little thatch is where she lives,  
Yon spire is where she met me ;—  
I think that if she quite forgives,  
She cannot quite forget me.*

LAST year I trod these fields with Di,  
Fields fresh with clover and with rye ;  
Now they seem arid.  
Then Di was fair and single ; how  
Unfair it seems on me, for now  
Di's fair—and married !

A blissful swain—I scorn'd the song  
Which says that though young Love is  
strong,  
The Fates are stronger:  
Breezes then blew a boon to men,  
The buttercups were bright, and then  
This grass was longer.

That day I saw and much esteem'd  
Di's ankles, which the clover seem'd  
Inclined to smother:  
It twitch'd, and soon untied (for fun)  
The ribbon of her shoes, first one,  
And then the other.

I'm told that virgins augur some  
Misfortune if their shoe-strings come  
To grief on Friday:  
And so did Di, and then her pride  
Decreed that shoe-strings so untied  
Are "so untidy!"

Of course I knelt; with fingers deft  
I tied the right, and tied the left:  
Says Di, "The stubble  
Is very stupid!—as I live  
I'm quite ashamed! . . . I'm shock'd  
to give  
You so much trouble!"

For answer I was fain to sink  
To what we all would say and think  
Were Beauty present:

144 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

"Don't mention such a simple act—  
A trouble? not the least! In fact  
It's rather pleasant!"

I trust that Love will never tease  
Poor little Di, or prove that he's  
A graceless rover.  
She's happy now as *Mrs. Smith*—  
And less polite when walking with  
Her chosen lover!

Heigh-ho! Although no moral clings  
To Di's blue eyes, and sandal strings,  
We've had our quarrels.  
I think that Smith is thought an ass,—  
I know that when they walk in grass  
She wears *balmorals*.

1864.



## IMPLORA PACE.

*My lot as I rove,  
Is to sing for the throng;  
And will not they love  
The poor child for his song?*

LIFE is at best a weary round  
Of mingled joy and woe ;  
How soon the passing knell will sound !  
Is death a friend or foe ?  
Our fleeting days are sad, and vain  
Is much that tempts us to remain  
Yet we are loth to go.  
Must I soon tread yon silent shore,  
Go hence, and then be seen no more ?

I love to think that those I loved  
May gather round the bier  
Of him who, if he erring proved,  
Still held them more than dear.  
My friends grow fewer day by day,  
Yes, one by one they drop away ;

146 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

And if I shed no tear,  
Departed shades, while life endures,  
This poor heart yearns for love—and  
Yours.

That day, will there be one to shed  
A tear behind the hearse?  
Or cry, "Poor *Yorick*, are you dead?  
I could have spared a worse—  
We never spoke; we never met;  
I never heard your voice; and yet  
*I loved you for your verse?*"  
Such love would make the flowers wave  
In gladness on their poet's grave.

A few, few years, like one short week,  
Will pass and leave behind  
A stone moss-grown, that none will  
seek,  
And none would care to find.  
Then I shall sleep, and gain release  
In perfect rest—the perfect peace  
For which my soul has pined;—  
And men will love, and weary men  
Will sue for quiet slumber then.

## MR. PLACID'S FLIRTATION.

*"Yemima was cross, and I lost my umbrella  
That day at the tomb of Cecilia Metella."*

LETTERS FROM ROME.

MISS TRISTRAM'S *poulet* ended thus :

"Nota bene,

We meet for croquet in the Aldobrandini."

Says my wife, "Then I'll drive, and  
you'll ride with Selina"

(Jones's fair spouse, of the Via Sistina).

We started : I'll own that my family  
doem

I'm an ass, but I'm not such an ass as I  
seem ;

As we crossed the stones gently a nurse-  
maid said "La—

There goes Mrs. Jones with Miss Placid's  
papa !"

148 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Our friends, one or two may be men-  
tion'd anon,  
Had arranged *rendezvous* at the Gate  
of St. John :  
That pass'd, off we spun over turf that's  
not green there,  
And soon were all met at the villa.  
You've been there ?

I'll try and describe, or I won't, if you  
please,  
The cheer that was set for us under the  
trees :  
You have read the *menu*, may you read  
it again ;  
Champagne, perigord, galantine, and—  
champagne.

Suffice it to say, I got seated between  
Mrs. Jones and old Brown—to the lat-  
ter's chagrin.  
Poor Brown, who believes in himself,  
and—another thing,  
Whose talk is so bald, but whose cheeks  
are so—t'other thing.

She sang, her sweet voice fill'd the gay  
garden alleys ;  
I jested, but Brown would not smile at  
my sallies ;—  
Selina remark'd that a swell met at  
Rome  
Is not always a swell when you meet  
him at home.

The luncheon despatch'd, we adjourn'd  
to croquet,  
A dainty, but difficult sport in its way.  
Thus I counsel the sage, who to play at  
it stoops,  
*Belabour thy neighbour, and spoon  
through thy hoops.*

Then we stroll'd, and discourse found  
its kindest of tones :  
" Oh, how charming were solitude and  
—Mrs. Jones ! "  
" Indeed, Mr. Placid, I dote on the  
sheeny  
And shadowy paths of the Aldobran-  
dini !

150 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

A girl came with violet posies, and two  
Gentle eyes, like her violets, freshen'd  
with dew,  
And a kind of an indolent, fine-lady  
air,—  
As if she by accident found herself there.

I bought one. Selina was pleased to accept it;  
She gave me a rosebud to keep—and  
I've kept it.  
Then twilight was near, and I think, in  
my heart,  
When she vow'd she must go, she was  
loth to depart.

*Callivo momento!* we dare not delay :  
The steeds are remounted, and wheels  
roll away :  
The ladies condemn Mrs. Jones, as the  
phrase is,  
But vie with each other in chanting my  
praises.

"He has so much to say!" cries the  
fair Mrs. Legge ;

MR. PLACID'S FLIRTATION. 151

"How amusing he was about missing  
the peg!"

"What a beautiful smile!" says the  
plainest Miss Gunn.

All echo, "He's charming! delightful!  
—What fun!"

This sounds rather *nice*, and it's per-  
fectly clear it

Had sounded more *nice* had I happen'd  
to hear it;

The men were less civil, and gave me a  
rub,

So I happen'd to hear when I went to  
the Club.

Says Brown, "I shall drop Mr. Placid's  
society;"

(Brown is a prig of improper propriety;)

"Hang him," said Smith (who from  
cant's not exempt),

"Why he'll bring immorality into con-  
tempt."

Says I (to myself) when I found me  
alone,

152 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

"My dear wife has my heart, is it always her own?"

And further, says I (to myself), "I'll be shot

If I know if Selina adores me or not."

Says Jones, "I've just come from the *scavi*, at Veii,

And I've brought some remarkably fine scarabæi!"



## BEGGARS.

*Some beggars look on : I extremely regret it—  
They wish for a taste. Don't they wish they may  
get it.*

*She thus aggravates both the humble and needy,—  
You'll own she is thoughtless—I think she is greedy.*

PUNCH.

I AM pacing the Mall in a rapt reverie,—  
I am thinking if Sophy is thinking of me,  
When I'm roused by a ragged and  
shivering wretch,  
Who seems to be well on his way to  
Jack Ketch.

He has got a bad face, and a shocking  
bad hat ;  
A comb in his fist, and he sees I'm a  
flat,  
For he says, " Buy a comb, it's a fine  
un to wear ;  
On'y try it, my Lord, through your whis-  
kers and 'air."

154 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

He eyes my gold chain, as if anxious to  
    crib it ;  
He looks just as if he'd been blown from  
    a gibbet.  
I pause . . . I pass on, and beside  
    the club fire  
I settle that Sophy is all I desire.

As I walk from the club, and am deep  
    in a strophè  
That rolls upon all that's delicious in  
    Sophy,  
I'm humbly address'd by an "object"  
    unnerving,  
So tatter'd a wretch must be "highly  
    deserving."

She begs,—I am touch'd, but I've great  
    circumspection :  
I stifle remorse with the soothing reflec-  
    tion  
That cases of vice are by no means a  
    rarity—  
The worst vice of all's indiscriminate  
    charity.

Am I right ? How I wish that my clerical guide  
 Would settle this question—and others  
 beside.  
 For always one's heart to be hardening  
 thus,  
 If wholesome for beggars, is hurtful for  
 us.

A few minutes later I'm happy and  
 free  
 To sip "*Its own Sophykins*" five-  
 o'clock tea :  
 Her table is loaded, for when a girl  
 marries,  
 What bushels of rubbish they send her  
 from *Barry's* !

"There's a present for you, Sir !" Yes,  
 thanks to her thrift,  
 My Pet has been able to buy me a gift ;  
 And she slips in my hand, the delight-  
 fully sly Thing,  
 A paper-weight form'd of a bronze lizard  
 writhing.

156 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

"What a charming *cadeau*! and so  
truthfully moulded ;  
But perhaps you don't know, or deserve  
to be scolded,  
That in casting this metal a live, harm-  
less lizard  
Was cruelly tortured in ghost and in  
gizzard ? "

"Po-oh !"—says my lady, (she always  
says "Pooh"  
When she's wilful, and does what she  
oughtn't to do !)  
"Hopgarten protests they've no feeling,  
and so  
It was only their *muscular movement*,  
you know ! "

Thinks I (when I've said *au revoir*, and  
depart—  
A Comb in my pocket, a Weight—at  
my heart),  
And when wretched mendicants writhe,  
there's a notion  
That begging is only their "muscular  
motion."

## THE JESTER'S MORAL.

*I grudge that lonely man his crook,  
It seems no idle whim  
That if he reads in Nature's book,  
Her voice has been to him  
A spiritual life, to sway  
And cheer him on his endless way.*

THE OLD SHEPHERD.

Is human life a pleasant game  
That gives the palm to all ?  
A fight for fortune, or for fame,  
A struggle, and a fall ?  
Who views the Past, and all he prized,  
With tranquil exultation ?  
And who can say—I've realised  
My fondest aspiration ?

Alas, not one. No, rest assured  
That all are prone to quarrel  
With fate, when worms destroy their  
gourd,  
Or mildew spoils their laurel :

The prize may come to cheer our lot,  
 But all too late ; and granted  
 If even better, still it's not  
 Exactly what we wanted.

My schoolboy time ! I wish to praise  
 That bud of brief existence,—  
 The vision of my younger days  
 Now trembles in the distance.  
 An envious vapour lingers here,  
 And there I find a chasm ;  
 But much remains, distinct and clear,  
 To sink enthusiasm.

Such thoughts just now disturb my soul  
 With reason good, for lately  
 I took the train to Marley-knoll,  
 And cross'd the fields to Mately.  
 I found old Wheeler at his gate,  
 He once rare sport could show me :  
 My Mentor too on springe and bait—  
 But Wheeler did not know me.

" Goodlord ! " at last exclaim'd the  
 churl,  
 " Are you the little chap, sir,

What used to train his hair in curl,  
And wore a scarlet cap, sir ? "  
And then he took to fill in blanks,  
And conjure up old faces ;  
And talk of well-remember'd pranks  
In half-forgotten places.

It pleased the man to tell his brief  
And rather mournful story,—  
Old Bliss's school had come to grief,  
And Bliss had " gone to glory."  
Fell'd were his trees, his house was  
razed,  
And what less keenly pain'd me,  
A venerable donkey grazed  
Exactly where he caned me.

And where have all my playmates sped,  
Whose ranks were once so serried ?  
Why some are wed, and some are dead,  
And some are only buried ;  
Frank Petre, then so full of fun,  
Is now St. Blaise's prior,  
And Travers, the attorney's son  
Is member for the shire.

Dull maskers we—Life's festival  
 Enchants the blithe new-comer ;  
 But seasons change ;—oh where are all  
 Those friendships of our summer ?  
 Wan pilgrims flit athwart our track,  
 Cold looks attend the meeting ;  
 We only greet them, glancing back,  
 Or pass without a greeting.

Old Bliss I owe some rubs, but pride  
 Constrains me to postpone 'em,—  
 Something he taught me, ere he died,  
 About *nil nisi bonum*.

I've met with wiser, better men,  
 But I forgive him wholly ;  
 Perhaps his jokes were sad, but then  
 He used to storm so drolly.

" I still can laugh " is still my boast,  
 But mirth has sounded gayer ;  
 And which provokes my laughter most,  
 The preacher or the player ?  
 Alack, I cannot laugh at what  
 Once made us laugh so freely ;  
 For Nestroy and Grassot are not—  
 And where is Mr. Keeley ?



I'll join St. Blaise (a verseman fit,  
More fit than I, once did it)  
—/ shave my crown? No, Common  
Wit

And Common Sense forbid it.  
I'd sooner dress your Little Miss  
As Paulet shaves his poodles!  
As soon propose for Betsy Bliss,  
Or get proposed for Boodle's.

We prate of Life's illusive dyes,  
And yet fond Hope misleads us;  
We all believe we near the prize,  
Till some fresh dupe succeeds us!  
And yet, tho' Life's a riddle, though  
No clerk has yet explain'd it,  
I still can hope; for well I know  
That Love has thus ordain'd it.

PARIS, *November*, 1864.

## ADVICE TO A POET.

*Now if you'll only take, perchance  
But half the pains to learn, that we  
Still take to hide our ignorance—  
How very clever you will be !*

DEAR Poet, do not rhyme at all !  
But if you must, don't tell your neighbours,  
Or five in six, who cannot scrawl,  
Will dub you donkey for your labours.  
This epithet may seem unjust  
To you, or any verse-begetter :  
Must we admit—I fear we must—  
That nine in ten deserve no better ?

Then let them bray with leathern lungs,  
And match you with the beast that  
grazes  
Or wag their heads, and hold their  
tongues,  
Or damn you with the faintest praises—

Be patient, but be sure you won't  
Win vogue without extreme vexation :  
Yet hope for sympathy,—but don't  
Expect it from a near relation.

When strangers first approved my  
books,  
My kindred marvell'd what the praise  
meant ;  
Now they wear more respectful looks,  
But can't get over their amazement.  
Indeed, they've power to wound, beyond  
That wielded by the fiercest hater,  
For all the time they are so fond—  
Which makes the aggravation greater.

\* \* \* \*

Most warblers only half express  
The threadbare thoughts they feebly  
utter :  
Now if they tried for something less,  
They might not sink, and gasp, and  
flutter.  
Fly low at first,—then mount, and win  
The niche for which the town's con-  
testing ;

And never mind your kith and kin—  
But never give them cause for jesting.

Hold Pegasus in hand, control  
A taste for ornament ensnaring ;  
Simplicity is yet the soul  
Of all that time deems worth the  
sparing.

Long lays are not a lively sport,  
So clip your own to half a quarter.  
If readers now don't think them short,  
Posterity will cut them shorter.

\* \* \* \*

I look on bards who whine for praise  
With feelings of profoundest pity :  
They hunger for the Poet's bays,  
And swear one's waspish when one's  
witty.

The critic's lot is passing hard—  
Between ourselves, I think reviewers,  
When call'd to truss a crowing bard,  
Should not be sparing of the skewers.

\* \* \* \*

We all, the foolish and the wise,  
Regard our verse with fascination,

Through asinine-paternal eyes,  
And hues of fancy's own creation ;  
Prythee, then, check that passing sneer  
At any self-deluded rhymers  
Who thinks his beer (the smallest beer !)  
Has all the gust of *alt hochheimer*.

\* \* \* \*

Oh, for the Poet-Voice that swells  
To lofty truths, or noble curses—  
I only wear the cap and bells,  
And yet some tears are in my verses.  
I softly trill my sparrow reed,  
Pleased if but one should like the  
twitter ;  
Humbly I lay it down to heed  
A music or a minstrel fitter.

## AN ASPIRATION.

*Alas, how deplorably love has miscarried,—  
The stripling is dead, and the virgin is married!*

I ASK'D Miss Di, who loves her sheep,  
To look at this Arcadian peep  
Of April leafage, pure and beamy :  
A pair of girls in hoops and nets  
Have found a pair of woolly pets,  
And all is young, and *nice*, and  
dreamy.

Miss Di has kindly eyes for all  
That's pretty, quaint, and pastoral :  
Said she, " These ladies sentimental  
Are lucky, in a world of shams,  
To find a pair of luckless lambs  
So white, and so extremely gentle."

I heard her with surprise and doubt,  
For though I don't much care about  
The world she spoke with such dis-  
dain of ;

And though the lamb I mostly see  
Is overdone, it seem'd to me  
That these had little to complain  
of.

When Beings of the fairer sex  
Arrange their white arms round our  
necks,  
We are, we ought to be enrapt-  
tured—  
Would that I were your lamb, Miss Di,  
Or even yon poor butterfly,  
With some small hope of being  
captured.

## A GARDEN IDYLL.

*There are plenty of roses (the patriarch speaks)  
But alas not for me, on your lips and your cheeks ;  
Sweet Maiden, rose laden—enough and to spare—  
Spare, O spare me the rose that you wear in your  
hair.*

**WE** have loiter'd and laugh'd in the  
flowery croft,  
We have met under wintry skies ;  
Her voice is the dearest voice, and soft  
Is the light in her wistful eyes ;  
It is sweet in the silent woods, among  
Gay crowds, or in any place  
To hear her voice, to gaze on her young  
Confiding face.

For ever may roses divinely blow,  
And wine-dark pansies charm  
By the prim box path where I felt the  
glow  
Of her dimpled, trusting arm,



And the sweep of her silk as she turn'd  
and smiled

A smile as fair as her pearls ;  
The breeze was in love with the darling  
child,  
As it moved her curls.

She show'd me her ferns and woodbine  
sprays,

Foxglove and jasmine stars,  
A mist of blue in the beds, a blaze  
Of red in the celadon jars :  
And velvety bees in convolvulus bells,  
And roses of bountiful June—  
Oh, who would think the summer spells  
Could die so soon !

For a glad song came from the milking  
shed,

On a wind of that summer south,  
And the green was golden above her  
head,  
And a sunbeam kiss'd her mouth ;  
Sweet were the lips where that sunbeam  
dwelt—

170 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

And the wings of Time were fleet  
As I gazed ; and neither spoke, for we  
felt  
Life was so sweet !

And the odorous limes were dim above  
As we leant on a drooping bough ;  
And the darkling air was a breath of  
love,  
And a witching thrush sang " Now ! "  
For the sun dropt low, and the twilight  
grew  
As we listen'd, and sigh'd, and leant—  
That day was the sweetest day—and we  
knew  
What the sweetness meant.

1868.

## ST. JAMES'S STREET.

(SEE NOTE.)

ST. JAMES'S STREET, of classic fame,  
The finest people throng it.  
St. James's Street? I know the name,  
I think I've passed along it!  
Why, that's where Sacharissa sigh'd  
When Waller read his ditty;  
Where Byron lived, and Gibbon died,  
And Alvanley was witty.

A famous street! To yonder Park  
Young Churchill stole in class-time;  
Come, gaze on fifty men of mark,  
And then recall the past time.  
The *plats* at White's, the play at *Crock's*,  
The bumpers to Miss Gunning;  
The *bonhomie* of Charlie Fox,  
And Selwyn's ghastly funning.

172 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

The dear old street of clubs and *cribs*,  
As north and south it stretches,  
Still seems to smack of Rolliad squibs,  
And Gillray's fiercer sketches ;  
The quaint old dress, the grand old  
style,  
The *mots*, the racy stories ;  
The wines, the dice, the wit, the bile—  
The hate of Whigs and Tories.

At dusk, when I am strolling there,  
Dim forms will rise around me ;—  
Lepel flits past me in her chair,  
And Congreve's airs astound me !  
And once Nell Gwynne, a frail young  
sprite,  
Look'd kindly when I met her ;  
I shook my head, perhaps,—but quite  
Forgot to quite forget her.

The street is still a lively tomb  
For rich, and gay, and clever ;—  
The crops of dandies bud and bloom,  
And die as fast as ever.

Now gilded youth loves cutty pipes,  
And slang that's rather scaring,—  
It can't approach its prototypes  
In taste, or tone, or bearing.

In Brummell's day of buckle shoes,  
Lawn cravats, and roll collars,  
They'd fight, and woo, and bet—and lose  
Like gentlemen and scholars :  
I'm glad young men should go the pace,  
I half forgive *Old Rapid* ;  
These louts disgrace their name and  
race—  
So vicious and so vapid !

Worse times may come. *Bon ton*, in-  
deed,  
Will then be quite forgotten,  
And all we much revere will speed  
From ripe to worse than rotten :  
Let grass then sprout between yon  
stones,  
And owls then roost at Boodle's,  
For Echo will hurl back the tones  
Of screaming *Yankee Doodles*.

174. POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

I love the haunts of Old Cockaigne,  
Where wit and wealth were squander'd ;

The halls that tell of hoop and train,  
Where grace and rank have wander'd ;

Those halls where ladies fair and leal  
First ventured to adore me !—

Something of that old love I feel  
For this old street before me.

1867.

## ROTTEN ROW.

*Most people like to bill and coo,  
And some have done it for the last time ;  
So, happy folk, we envy you  
Your pleasant and improving pastime.*

I HOPE I'm fond of much that's good,  
As well as much that's gay ;  
I'd like the country if I could ;  
I love the Park in May :  
And when I ride in Rotten Row,  
I wonder why they call'd it so.

A lively scene on turf and road ;  
The crowd is bravely drest :  
The *Ladies' Mile* has overflow'd,  
The chairs are in request :  
The nimble air, so soft, so clear,  
Hardly can stir a ringlet here.

I'll halt beneath the pleasant trees,  
And drop my bridle-rein,

And, quite alone, indulge at ease  
The philosophic vein :  
I'll moralise on all I see—  
Yes, it was all arranged for me !

Forsooth, and on a livelier spot  
The sunbeam never shines.  
Fair ladies here can talk and trot  
With statesmen and divines :  
Could I have chosen, I'd have been  
A Duke, a Beauty, or a Dean.

What grooms ! What gallant gentlemen !

What well-appointed hacks !  
What glory in their pace, and then  
What beauty on their backs !  
My Pegasus would never flag  
If weighted as my lady's nag.

But where is now the courtly troop  
That once rode laughing by ?  
I miss the curls of Cantilupe,  
The laugh of Lady Di :  
They all could laugh from night to morn,  
And Time has laugh'd them all to scorn.



I then could frolic in the van  
 With dukes and dandy earls ;  
 Then I was thought a *nice* young man  
 By rather *nice* young girls !  
 I've half a mind to join Miss Browne,  
 And try one canter up and down.

Ah, no—I'll linger here a while,  
 And dream of days of yore ;  
 For me bright eyes have lost the smile,  
 The sunny smile they wore :—  
 Perhaps they say, what I'll allow,  
 That I'm not quite so handsome now.

1867.

## A NICE CORRESPONDENT !

*An angel at noon, she's a woman at night,  
All softness, and sweetness, and love, and delight.*

THE glow and the glory are plighted  
To darkness, for evening is come ;  
The lamp in Glebe Cottage is lighted,  
The birds and the sheep-bells are  
dumb.

I'm alone at my casement, for *Pappy*  
Is summoned to dinner to Kew :  
I'm alone, dearest Fred, but I'm happy—  
I'm thinking of you !

I wish you were here ! Were I duller  
Than dull, you'd be dearer than dear ;  
I am drest in your favourite colour—  
Dear Fred, how I wish you were here !  
I am wearing my lazuli necklace,  
The necklace you fasten'd askew !  
Was there ever so rude or so reckless  
A darling as you ?

I want you to come and pass sentence  
On two or three books with a plot ;  
Of course you know " Janet's Repent-  
ance " ?

I'm reading Sir *Waverley* Scott,  
The story of Edgar and Lucy,  
How thrilling, romantic, and true !  
The Master (his bride was a *goosey* !)  
Reminds me of you.

They tell me Cockaigne has been  
crowning

A Poet whose garland endures ;  
It was you who first spouted me Brown-  
ing,—

That stupid old Browning of yours !  
His vogue and his verve are alarming,  
I'm anxious to give him his due,  
But, Fred, he's not nearly so charming  
A poet as you !

I heard how you shot at The Beeches,  
I saw how you rode *Chanticleer*,  
I have read the report of your speeches,  
And echo'd the echoing cheer.

180 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

There's a whisper of hearts you are  
breaking,

Dear Fred, I believe it, I do !—  
Small marvel that Fashion is making  
Her idol of you !

Alas for the world, and its dearly  
Bought triumph, its fugitive bliss ;  
Sometimes I half wish I were merely  
A plain or a penniless miss ;  
But, perhaps, one is best with a "meas-  
ure  
Of pelf," and I'm not sorry, too,  
That I'm pretty, because 'tis a pleasure,  
My darling, to you !

Your whim is for frolic and fashion,  
Your taste is for letters and art ;—  
This rhyme is the commonplace passion  
That glows in a fond woman's heart :  
Lay it by in a dainty deposit  
For relics—we all have a few !  
Love, some day they'll print it, because it  
Was written to you.

## AN OLD BUFFER.

**BUFFER.**—A cushion or apparatus, with strong springs, to deaden the buff or concussion between a moving body and one on which it strikes.—*Webster's English Dictionary.*

*"If Blossom's a sceptic, or saucy, I'll search,  
And I'll find her a wholesome corrective—in  
Church!"*

*MAMMA loquitur.*

"A KNOCK-ME-DOWN sermon, and  
worthy of Birch,"

Says I to my wife, as we toddle from  
church;

"Convincing indeed!" is the lady's re-  
mark;

"How logical, too, on the size of the  
Ark!"

Then Blossom cut in, without begging  
our pardons,

"Pa, was it as big as the 'Logical Gar-  
dens?"

182 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

"Miss Blossom," says I to my dearest  
of dearies,

"Papa disapproves of nonsensical que-  
ries ;

The Ark was an Ark, and had people to  
build it,

Enough we are told Noah built it and  
fill'd it :

Mamma does not ask how he caught his  
opossums."

—Said she, "That remark is as foolish  
as Blossom's !"

Thus talking and walking, the time is  
beguiled

By my orthodox wife and my sceptical  
child ;

I act as their *buffer*, whenever I can,  
And you see I'm of use as a family  
man.

I parry their blows, I have plenty to  
do—

I think that the child's are the worst of  
the two !

My wife has a healthy aversion for  
sceptics,  
She vows they are bad—they are only  
dyspeptics !  
May Blossom prove neither the one nor  
the other,  
But do as she's bid by her excellent  
mother.—  
She thinks I'm a Solon ; perhaps, if I  
huff her,  
She'll think I'm a—something that's  
denser and tougher.

TO LINA OSWALD.

(AGED FIVE YEARS.)

*When vapid poets vex thee sore,  
Thy Mentor's old, and would remind thee,  
That if thy griefs are all before,  
Thy pleasures are not all behind thee.*

I TUMBLE out of bed betimes  
To make my love these toddling rhymes ;  
And meet the hour, and meet the place  
To bless her blythe good-morning face.  
I send her all this heart can store ;  
I seem to see her as before,  
An angel-child, divinely fair,  
With meek blue eyes, and golden hair,  
Curls tipt with changing light, that shed  
A little glory round her head.

Has poet ever sung or seen a  
Sweeter, wiser child than Lina ?  
Blue are her sash and snood, and blue's  
The hue of her bewitching shoes ;  
But, saving these, she's virgin dight,  
A happy creature clad in white.



Again she stands beneath the boughs,  
Reproves the pup, and feeds the cows ;  
Unvexed by rule, unscared by ill,  
She wanders at her own sweet will ;  
For what grave fiat could confine  
My little charter'd libertine,  
Yet free from feeling or from seeing  
The burthen of her moral being ?

But change must come, and forms and  
dyes  
Will change before her changing eyes ;  
She'll learn to blush, and hope, and  
fear—  
And where shall I be then, my dear ?

Little gossip, set apart  
But one small corner of thy heart ;  
Still there is one not quite employ'd,  
So let me find and fill that void ;  
Run then, and jump, and laugh, and  
play,  
But love me though I'm far away.

BROOMHALL, *September, 1868.*

## ON "A PORTRAIT OF A LADY."

BY THE PAINTER.

*I gathered it wet for my own sweet Pet  
As we whisper'd and walk'd apart :  
She gave me that rose, it is fragrant yet,—  
And oh, it is near my heart.*

SHE is good, for she must have a guile-  
less mind

With that noble, trusting air ;  
A rose with a passionate heart is twined  
In her crown of golden hair.  
Some envy the cross that caressingly  
dips

In her bosom, and some had died  
For the promise of bliss on her red, red  
lips,  
And her thousand charms beside.

She is lovely and good ; she has peerless  
eyes ;—  
A haunting shape. She stands

ON "A PORTRAIT OF A LADY." 187

In a blossoming croft, under kindling  
skies ;

The weirdest of facry lands.

There are sapphire hills by the far-off  
seas,

Grave laurels, and tender limes ;

They tremble and glow in the amorous  
breeze,

—My Beauty is up betimes.

A bevy of idlers press around,

To wonder, and wish, and loll ;

"Now who is the painter, and where  
has he found

The woman we all extol,

With her fresh young mouth, and her  
candid brow,

And a bloom as of bygone days ?"

How natural sounds their worship, how  
Impertinent seems their praise !

I stand aloof ; I can well afford

To pardon the babble and crush

As they praise a work (do I need re-  
ward ?)

188 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

That has grown beneath my brush :  
Aloof—and, in fancy, again I hear  
The music clash in the hall,  
When they crown'd her Queen of their  
dance and cheer,  
—She is mine, and Queen of all !

Yes, my thoughts are away to that  
happy day,  
A few short months ago,  
When we left the games, and the dance,  
to stray  
Through the dewy flowers, alone.  
My feet are again among flowers divine,  
Away from the noise and glare,  
When I kiss'd her mouth, and her lips  
press'd mine,—  
And I fasten'd that rose in her hair.

1868.

## THE MUSIC PALACE.

*Shall you go? I don't ask you to seek it or shun it ;  
I went on an impulse, I've been and I've done it.*

So this is a music-hall, easy and free,  
A temple for singing, and dancing, and  
*spree ;*

The band is at *Faust*, and the benches  
are filling,

And all that I have can be had for a  
shilling.

The senses are charm'd by the sights  
and the sounds ;

A spirit of affable gladness abounds :  
With zest we applaud, and as madly  
recall

The singer, the *cellar-flap-dancer*, and  
all.

What Vision comes on with a wreath  
and a lyre ?

190 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

A creature of impulse in scanty attire ;  
She plays the good sprite in a dream-  
haunted dell,  
She has ankles ! and eyes like a wistful  
gazelle.

A clown sings a song, and a droll cuts a  
caper,  
And then she dissolves in a rose-colour'd  
vapour :  
Then an imp on a rope is a painfully  
pleasant  
*Sensation* for all the mammas that are  
present.

But who is the damsel that smiles to me  
there  
With so reckless, indeed, so defiant an  
air ?  
She is bright—that she's pretty is more  
than I'll say.  
Is she happy ? At least she's exceed-  
ingly gay.

It seems to me now, as we pass up the  
street,

Is Nell worse than I, or the worthies we  
meet ?

She is reckless, her conduct's exceed-  
ingly sad—

A coin may be light, but it need not be  
bad.

Heaven help thee, poor child : now a  
graccless and gay thing,

You once were your mother's, her pet  
and her plaything.

Where was your home ? Are the stars  
that look down

On that home, the cold stars of this  
pitiless town ?

The stars are a riddle we never may  
read—

I prest her poor hand, and I bade her  
*Godspeed !*

She left me a heart overladen with sor-  
row—

You may hear Nelly's laugh at the  
palace to-morrow !

192 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Ah! some go to revel, and some go to  
rue,

For some go to ruin. There's Paul's  
tolling two.



## A TERRIBLE INFANT.

I RECOLLECT a nurse call'd Ann,  
Who carried me about the grass,  
And one fine day a fine young man  
Came up, and kiss'd the pretty lass :  
She did not make the least objection !  
Thinks I, "*Aha !*  
*When I can talk I'll tell Mamma.*"  
—And that's my earliest recollection.

## WITH A BOOK OF SMALL SKETCHES.

IN days gone by, and year by year,  
I gleaned the sketchlets garnered here :  
Some pains they cost me, much shoe  
leather  
Before they all were got together.  
Dear children, I must flit anon ;  
O, guard them kindly when I'm gone.

## AT HURLINGHAM.

THIS was dear Willy's brief despatch,  
A curt and yet a cordial summons;—  
“Do come! I'm in to-morrow's match,  
And see us whip the *Faithful Commons*.”

We trundled out behind the bays,  
Through miles and miles of brick and  
garden;  
Mamma was drest in mauve and  
maize,—  
Of course I wore my *Dolly Varden*.

A charming scene, and lively too,  
The paddock's full, the band is play-  
ing  
*Boulotte's* song in *Barbe bleue*;  
And what are all these people saying?  
They flirt! they bet! There's Linda  
Reeves

Too lovely ! I'd give worlds to borrow  
Her yellow rose with russet leaves !—

I'll wear a yellow rose to-morrow !

And there are May and Algy Meade ;  
How proud she looks on her promotion !

The ring must be amused indeed,

And edified by such devotion !

I wonder if she ever guess'd !

I wonder if he'll call on Friday !

I often wonder which is best !—

I only hope my hair is tidy !

Some girls repine, and some rejoice,  
And some get bored, but I'm contented

To make my destiny my choice,—

I'll never dream that I've repented.

There's something sad *in loved and  
cross'd,*

For all the fond, fond hope that rings  
it :

There's something sweet in " loved and  
lost "—

And Oh, how sweetly Alfred sings it !

196 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

I'll own I'm bored with *handicaps* !—  
*Bluerocks* ! (they always are "*bluerock*"-ing !)—

With May, a little bit, perhaps,—  
And yon Faust's *teufelskünd* is shocking !

Bang . . . bang . . . ! That's Willy !  
There's his bird,  
Blithely it cleaves the skies above  
me !

He's miss'd all ten ! He's too absurd !—  
I hope he'll always, always love me !

We've lost ! To tea, then back to  
town ;

The crowd is laughing, eating, drinking :

The moon's eternal eyes look down,—  
Of what can yon sad moon be thinking  
Oh, but for some good fairy's wand,—  
This pigeoncide is worse 'than silly,  
But still I'm very, very fond  
Of Hurlingham, and tea,—and Willy.

## UNREFLECTING CHILDHOOD.

*The world would lose its finest joys  
Without its little girls and boys ;  
Their careless glee, and simple ruth,  
And trust, and innocence, and truth.  
—Ah, what would your feet do  
Without such little folk as you ?*

IT is, indeed, a little while  
Since you were born, my happy pet ;  
Your future beckons with a smile,  
Your by-gones don't exist as yet.  
Is all the world with beauty rife ?  
Are you a little bird that sings  
Her simple gratitude for life,  
And lovely things ?

The ocean, and the waning moons,  
And starry skies, and starry dells,  
And winter sport, and golden Junes,  
Art, and divinest Beauty-spells :

198 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Festa and song, and frolic wit,  
And banter, and domestic mirth,—  
They all are ours !—dear child, is it  
A pleasant earth ?

And poet friends, and poesy,  
And precious books, for any mood :  
And then that best of company,  
Those graver thoughts in solitude  
That hold us fast and never pall :  
Then there is You, my own, my fair—  
And I . . . soon I must leave it all,  
—And much you care.

1871.

## **LITTLE DINKY.**

**(A RHYME OF LESS THAN ONE.)**

**THE** hair she means to have is gold,  
Her eyes are blue, she's twelve weeks  
old,

Plump are her fists and pinky.  
She fluttered down in lucky hour  
From some blue deep in yon sky bower—  
I call her **LITTLE DINKY.**

A Tiny now, ere long she'll please  
To totter at my parent-knees,  
And crow, and try to chatter :  
And soon she'll take to fair white frocks,  
And frisk about in shoes and socks,—  
Her totter changed to patter.

And soon she'll play, ay, soon enough,  
At cowslip-ball and blindman's-buff ;

200 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

And, some day, we shall find her  
Grow weary of her toys—indeed  
She'll fling them all aside to heed  
A footstep close behind her.

And years to come she'll still be rich  
In what is left, the joys with which  
Our love can aye supply us ;  
For hand in hand we'll sit us down  
Right cheerfully and let the town—  
This foolish town, go by us.

*Dinky, we must resign our toys  
To younger girls, to finer boys,—  
But we'll not care a feather :  
For then (reflection's not regret)  
Tho' you'll be rather old ! we'll yet  
Be boy and girl together.*

As I was climbing Ludgate Hill  
I met a goose who dropt a quill,—  
You see my thumb is inky ;—  
I fell to scribble there and then,  
And this is how I came to pen  
These rhymes on LITTLE DINKY.



## GERTRUDE'S NECKLACE.

As Gerty skipt from babe to girl,  
Her necklace lengthen'd, pearl by pearl ;  
Year after year it grew, and grew,  
For every birthday gave her two.  
Her neck is lovely, soft and fair,  
And now her necklace glimmers there.

So cradled, let it sink and rise,  
And all her graces emblemize.  
Perchance this pearl, without a speck,  
Once was as warm on Sappho's neck ;—  
Where are the happy, twilight pearls  
That braided Beatrice's curls ?

Is Gerty loved ?—Is Gerty loth ?  
Or, if she's either, is she both ?  
She's fancy free, but sweeter far  
Than many plighted maidens are :  
Will Gerty smile us all away,  
And still be Gerty ? Who can say ?

202 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

But let her wear her precious toy,  
And I'll rejoice to see her joy :  
Her bauble's only one degree  
Less frail, less fugitive than we ;  
For time, ere long, will snap the skein,  
And scatter all the pearls again.

## GERTRUDE'S GLOVE.

*Elle avait au bout de ses manches  
Une paire de mains si blanches !*

SLIPS of a kid-skin deftly sewn,  
A scent as through her garden blown,  
The tender hue that clothes her dove,  
All these, and this is Gerty's glove.

A glove but lately doff'd, for look—  
It keeps the happy shape it took  
Warm from her touch ! What gave the  
glow ?

And where's the mould that shaped it so ?

It clasp'd the hand, so pure, so sleek,  
Where Gerty rests a pensive cheek,  
The hand that when the light wind stirs,  
Reproves those laughing locks of hers.

You fingers four, you little thumb !  
Were I but you, in days to come  
I'd clasp, and kiss,—I'd keep her—go !  
And tell her that I told you so.

KISSINGEN, *September*, 1871.

## MABEL.

### I.

#### AT HER WINDOW.

*Ah, minstrel, how strange is  
The carol you sing !  
Let Psyche, who ranges  
The garden of spring,  
Remember the changes  
December will bring.*

BEATING heart ! we come again  
Where my Love reposes :  
This is Mabel's window-pane ;  
These are Mabel's roses.

Is she nsted ? Does she kneel  
In the twilight stillly ;  
Lily clad from throat to heel,  
She, my virgin lily ?

Soon the wan, the wistful stars,  
Fading, will forsake her ;

Elves of light, on beamy bars,  
Whisper then, and wake her.

Let this friendly pebble plead  
At her flowery grating.

If she hear me will she heed ?

*Mabel, I am waiting.*

Mabel will be deck'd anon,  
Zoned in bride's apparel ;  
Happy zone !—Oh hark to yon  
Passion-shaken carol !

Sing thy song, thou tranced thrush,  
Pipe thy best, thy clearest ;—  
Hush, her lattice moves, O hush—  
Dearest Mabel !—dearest . . .

## II.

### HER MUFF.

#### LIVELY SHEPHERDESS.

*Now mind,  
He'll call on you to-morrow at eleven,  
And beg that you will dine with us at seven ;  
If, when He calls, you see that He has got  
His green umbrella, then you'll know He'll not  
Be going to the House, and you'll decline,  
But if He hasn't it, you'll come and dine.*

206 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

HAPPY SHEPHERD.

*But if it rains : then how ! and where ! and when !  
And how about the green umbrella then !*

LIVELY SHEPHERDESS.

*Then He'll be wet, that's all, for if I don't  
Choose He should take it, why, of course ! you goose !  
He won't.*

ARCADY.

SHE's jealous ! Does it grieve me ? No !  
I'm glad to see my Mabel so,

*Carina mia !*

Poor Puss ! That now and then she  
draws

Conclusions, not without a cause,  
Is my idea.

She loves ; and I'm prepared to prove  
That jealousy is kin to love

In constant women.

My jealous Pussy cut up rough  
The day before I bought her muff  
With sable trimming.

These tearful darlings think to quell us  
By being so divinely jealous ;  
But I know better.

Hillo! Who's that? A damsel! Come,  
I'll follow :—no, I can't, for some  
One else has met her.

What fun! He looks "a lad of grace."  
She holds her muff to hide her face;  
They kiss,—The Sly Puss!  
Hillo! Her muff,—it's trimm'd with  
sable! . .

It's like the muff I gave to Mabel! . . .  
Goodl-o-r-d, SHE'S MY PUSS!

TO LINA OSWALD.

(WITH A BIRTHDAY LOCKET.)

*"My darling wants to see you soon,"—  
I bless the little maid, and thank her;  
To do her bidding, night and noon  
I draw on Hope—Love's kindest banker!*

YOUR Sun is in brightest apparel,  
Your birds and your blossoms are gay,  
But where is my jubilant carol  
To welcome so joyous a day?  
I sang for you when you were smaller,  
As fair as a fawn, and as wild:  
Now, Lina, you're ten and you're taller—  
You elderly child.

I knew you in shadowless hours,  
When thought never came with a  
smart;  
You then were the pet of your flowers,  
And joy was the child of your heart.  
I ever shall love you, and dearly!—  
I think when you're even thirteen



You'll still have a heart, and not merely  
A flirting machine !

And when time shall have spoil'd you of  
passion,—

Discrown'd what you now think sub-  
lime,

Oh, I swear that you'll still be the fashion,  
And laugh at the antics of time.

To love you will then be no duty ;

But happiness nothing can buy—

There's a bud in your garland, my  
beauty,

That never can die.

A heart may be bruised and not bro-  
ken,—

A soul may despair and still reck ;—

I send you, dear child, a poor token

Of love, for your dear little neck.

The heart that will beat just below it

Is open and pure as your brow—

May that heart, when you come to be-  
stow it,

Be happy as now.

## THE REASON WHY.

ASK why I love the roses fair,  
And whence they come and whose they  
were ;  
They come from her, and not alone,  
They bring her sweetness with their  
own.

Or ask me why I love her so,  
I know not, this is all I know,  
These roses bud and bloom, and twine  
As she round this fond heart of mine.

And this is why I love the flowers,  
Once they were hers, they're mine—  
they're ours !  
I love her, and they soon will die,  
And now you know the reason why.

## A WINTER FANTASY.

*December has brought you a bonnie May,—  
A bonnie sweetheart is bound your way :  
He is coming—the' you little wot,—  
You are waiting—yet he knows it not !*

YOUR veil is thick, and none would  
know

The pretty face it quite obscures ;  
But if you foot it through the snow,  
Distrust those little boots of yours.

The tell-tale snow, a sparkling mould,  
Says where they go and whence they  
came,  
Lightly they touch its carpet cold,  
And where they touch they sign your  
name.

She pass'd beneath yon branches bare,  
How fair her face, and how content !  
I only know her face was fair,—  
I only know she came and went.

212 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Pipe, robins, pipe ; though boughs be  
bleak,

Ye are her winter choristers ;  
Whose cheek will press that rose-cold  
cheek ?

What lips those fresh young lips of  
hers ?

## THE UNREALIZED IDEAL.

MY only love is always near,—  
In country or in town  
I see her twinkling feet, I hear  
The whisper of her gown.

She foots it ever fair and young,  
Her locks are tied in haste,  
And one is o'er her shoulder flung,  
And hangs below her waist.

She ran before me in the meads ;  
And down this world-worn track  
She leads me on ; but while she leads  
She never gazes back.

And yet her voice is in my dreams,  
To witch me more and more ;  
That wooing voice ! Ah me, it seems  
Less near me than of yore.

214 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Lightly I sped when hope was high,  
And youth beguiled the chase,—  
I follow, follow still ; but I  
Shall never see her face.

## IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

A FRIENDLY bird with bosom red  
Is fluting near my garden seat ;  
Your sky is fair above my head,  
And Tweed rejoices at my feet.

The squirrels gambol in the oak,  
All, all is glad, but you prefer  
To linger on amid the smoke  
Of stony-hearted Westminster.

Again I read your letter through,—  
“ How wonderful is fate's decree,  
How sweet is all your life to you,  
And oh, how sad is mine to me.”

I know your wail—who knows it not?—  
HE gave,—HE taketh that HE gave.  
Yours is the lot, the common lot,  
To go down weeping to the grave.

216 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

Sad journey to a dark abyss,  
Meet ending of your sorrow keen,—  
The burden of My dirge is this,  
And this My woe,—*It might have  
been !*

Dear bird ! Blithe bird that sings in  
frost  
Forgive my friend if he is sad ;  
He mourns what he has only lost,—  
I weep what I have never had.

*Lena, September 27, 1873.*



## LOVE AND DEATH.

AY me, dread friends of mine are Love  
and Death :—

Sweet Love who came to me on sheeny  
wing,

And gave her to my arms—her lips, her  
breath,

And all her golden ringlets clustering :  
While Time was gathering in the golden  
years

Love gave me all, but where is all he  
gave ?

Death took my Joy and left me barren  
tears,—

Weary and lone I follow to the grave.  
There Death will end this vision half  
divine,

Wan Death, who waits in shadow  
evermore,  
And silent, ere he give the sudden sign ;

218 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.

O, gently lead me thro' thy narrow  
door,  
Thou gentle Death, now kindest friend  
of mine,  
—Ah me for Love . . . *will* Death  
my Love restore ?

## THE OLD STONEMASON.

A SHOWERY day in early spring—  
An old man and a child  
Are seated near a scaffolding  
Where marble blocks are piled.

His clothes are stain'd by age and soil,  
As hers by rain and sun ;  
He looks as if his days of toil  
Were very nearly done.

To eat his dinner he had sought  
A staircase proud and vast,  
And here the duteous child had brought  
His scanty noon repast.

A worn-out workman needing aid ;—  
A blooming child of light ;—  
The stately palace steps ;—all made  
A most pathetic sight.

**220 POEMS OF FREDERICK LOCKER.**

**We had sought shelter from the storm,  
And saw this lowly pair,  
But none could see a Shining Form  
That watch'd beside them there.**

**1874.**

## A RHYME OF ONE.

*Explain why childhood's path is sown  
With moral and scholastic tin tacks;  
Ere sin (Original) was known,  
Did Adam groan beneath the syntax?*

YOU sleep upon your mother's breast,  
Your race begun,  
A welcome, long a wish'd-for guest,  
Whose age is One.

A baby-boy, you wonder why  
You cannot run;  
You try to talk—how hard you try!—  
You're only One.

Ere long you won't be such a dunce;  
You'll eat your bun,  
And fly your kite, like folk, who once  
Were only One.

You'll rhyme, and woo, and fight, and  
joke,

Perhaps you'll pun !  
Such feats are never done by folk  
Before they're One.

Some day, too, you may have your joy,  
And envy none ;  
Yes, you, yourself, may own a boy,  
Who isn't One.

He'll dance, and laugh, and crow, he'll  
do  
As you have done :  
(You crown a happy home, tho' you  
Are only One).

But when he's grown shall you be here  
To share his fun,  
And talk of times when he (the dear !)  
Was hardly One ?

Dear child, 'tis your poor lot to be  
My little son ;  
I'm glad, though I am old, you see,—  
While you are One.

## MY SONG.

YOU ask a song,  
Such as of yore, an autumn's even-  
tide,  
Some blest boy-poet caroll'd,—and then  
died.  
Nay, / have sung too long.

Say, shall I fling  
A sigh to Beauty at her window-pane?  
I sang there once, might I not once  
again?—  
Or tell me whom to sing.

The peer of Peers?  
Lord of the wealth that gives his time  
employ—  
Time to possess, but hardly to enjoy—  
He cannot need *my* tears.

The man of *mind*,  
Or priest, who darkens what is clear as  
day?  
I cannot sing them, yet I will not say  
Such guides are wholly blind.

The Orator?  
He quiet lies where yon fresh hillock  
heaves :  
'Twere well to sprinkle there those  
laurel-leaves  
He won,—but never wore.

Or shall I twine  
The Cypress? Wreath of glory and of  
gloom,—  
To march a gallant soldier to his doom,  
Needs fuller voice than mine.

No lay have I,  
No murmured measure meet for your  
delight,  
No song of Love and Death, to make  
you quite  
Forget that we must die.



Something is wrong,—  
The world is over-wise ; or, more's the  
pity,  
These days are far too busy for a ditty,  
Yet take it,—take my Song.

1876.

## INCHBAE.

ANON he shuts the solemn book  
To heed the falling of the brook,  
He cares but little why it flows,  
Or whence it comes, or where it goes.

For here, on this delightful bank,  
His past—his future are a blank ;  
Enough for him the bloom, the cheer,  
They all are his, to-day and here.

But hark a voice that carols free,  
And fills the air with melody !  
She comes ! a creature clad in grace,  
And gospel promise in her face.

So let her fearlessly intrude  
On this his much loved solitude ;  
Is she a lovely phantom, or  
That love he long has waited for ?

•       •       •       •

O welcome as the morning dew ;  
Long, long have I expected you ;  
Come, share my seat, and, late or soon,  
All else that's mine beneath the moon.

And sing your happy roundelay  
While nature listens. Till to-day  
This mirthful stream has never known  
A cadence gladder than its own :

Forgive if I too fondly gaze,  
Or praise the eyes that others praise :  
I watch'd my Star, I've wander'd far—  
Are you my joy? You know you are !

Let others praise, as others prize,  
The witching twilight of your eyes—  
I cannot praise you : I adore,  
And that is praise—and something more.

## ANY POET TO HIS LOVE.

*A rather sad man, still at times he was jolly,  
And though hating a fool he'd a weakness for jolly.*

IMMORTAL VERSE! Is mine the strain  
To last and live? As ages wane  
Will one be found to twine the bays,  
And praise me then as now you praise?

Will there be one to praise? Ah no!  
My laurel leaf may never grow;  
My bust is in the quarry yet,—  
Oblivion weaves my coronet.

Immortal for a month—a week!  
The garlands wither as I speak;  
The song will die, the harp's unstrung,—  
But, singing, have I vainly sung?

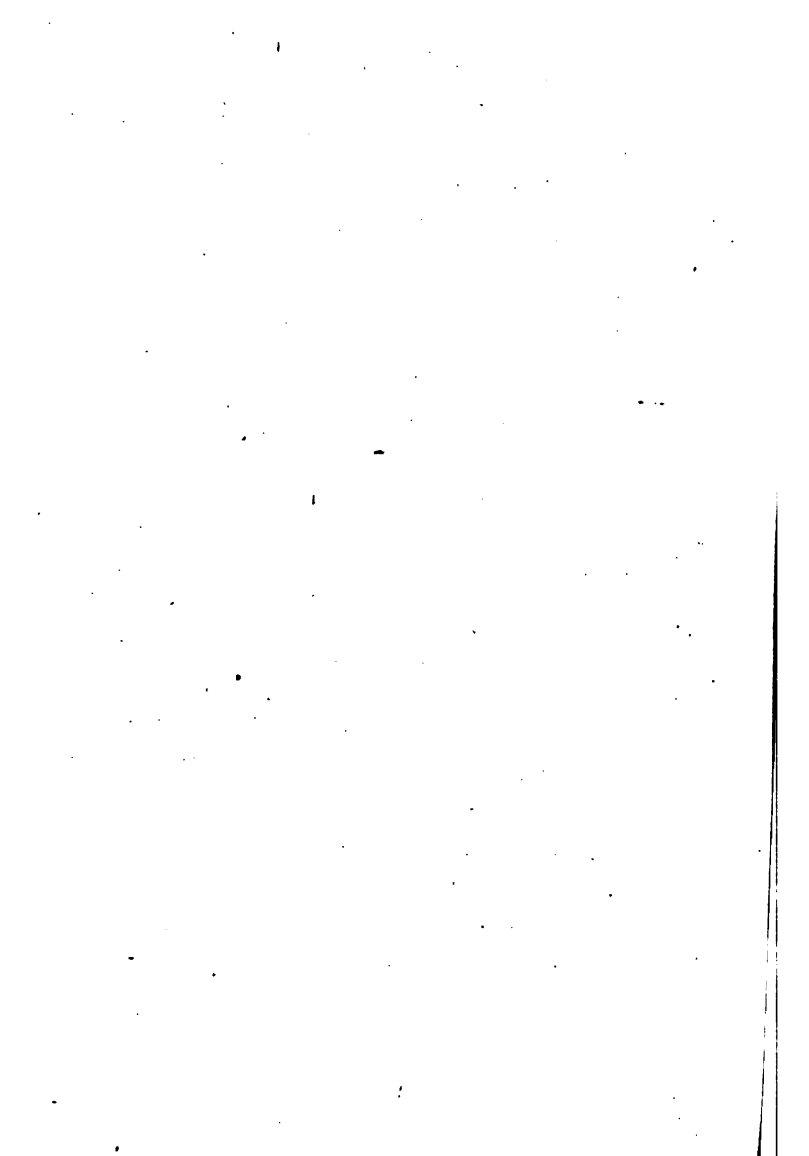
You deign'd to lend an ear the while  
I trill'd my lay. I won your smile.

Now, let it die, or let it live,—  
My verse was all I had to give.

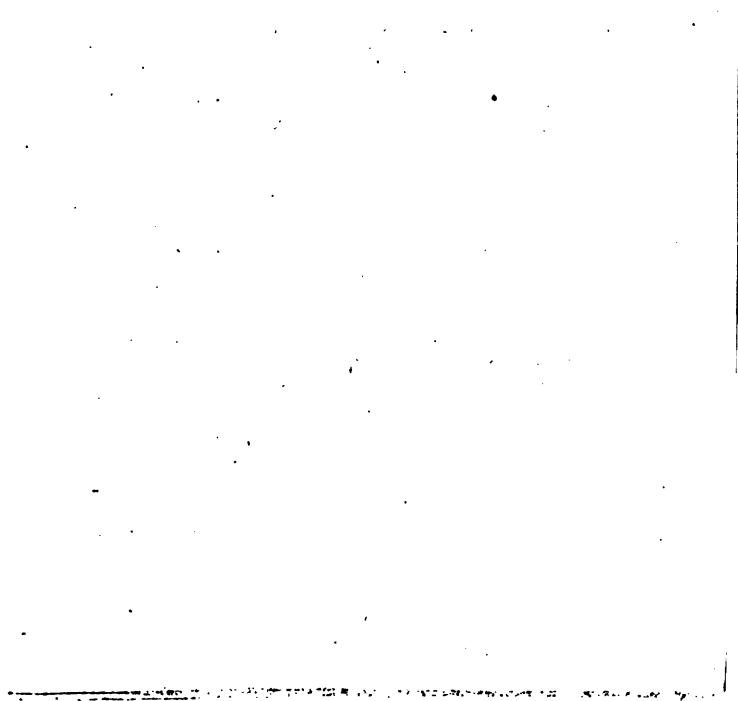
The linnet flies on wistful wings,  
And finds a bower, and lights and  
sings ;

Enough if my poor verse endures  
To light, and live—to die in yours.

1875



## NOTES.





## NOTES.

### "ST. GEORGE'S, HANOVER SQUARE."

"DANS le bonheur de nos meilleurs amis nous trouvons souvent quelque chose qui ne nous plait pas entièrement."

### "A HUMAN SKULL."

"IN our last month's Magazine you may remember there were some verses about a portion of a skeleton. Did you remark how the poet and present proprietor of the human skull at once settled the sex of it, and determined off-hand that it must have belonged to a woman? Such skulls are locked up in many gentlemen's hearts and memories. Blue-beard, you know, had a whole museum of them—as that imprudent little last wife of his found out to her cost. And, on the other hand, a lady, we suppose, would select hers of the sort which had carried beards when in the flesh."—*Adventures of Philip on his Way*

*through the World. Cornhill Magazine, January, 1861.\**

"TO MY OLD FRIEND POSTUMUS."

The Well-beloved!—B. L. died 26th July,  
1853.

"TO MY MISTRESS."

M. Deschanel quotes the following charming little poem by Corneille, addressed to a young lady who had not been quite civil to him. He says with truth—"Le sujet est léger, le rythme court, mais on y retrouve la fierté de l'homme, et aussi l'ampleur du tragique." The last four stanzas, in particular, are brimful of spirit, and the mixture of pride and vanity they display is remarkable.

"Marquise, si mon visage  
A quelques traits un peu vieux,  
Souvenez-vous, qu'à mon âge  
Vous ne vaudrez guère mieux.

---

\* When I first sent these lines to the Cornhill Magazine, Mr. Thackeray, the editor, and an admirable judge of verse, proposed an alteration in the third stanza, and he returned it to me as it now stands. Originally I had made it to run thus :—

Did she live yesterday, or ages sped?  
What colour were the eyes when bright and waking?  
And were your ringlets fair? Poor little head!  
—Poor little heart! that long has done with aching.

- " Le temps aux plus belles choses  
Se plaît à faire un affront,  
Et saura faner vos roses  
Comme il a ridé mon front.
- " Le même cours des planètes  
Règle nos jours et nos nuits ;  
On m'a vu ce que vous êtes,  
Vous serez ce que je suis.
- " Cependant j'ai quelques charmes  
Qui sont assez éclatants  
Pour n'avoir pas trop d'alarmes  
De ces ravages du temps.
- " Vous en avez qu'on adore,  
Mais ceux que vous méprisez  
Pourraient bien durer encore  
Quand ceux-là seront usés.
- " Ils pourront sauver la gloire  
Des yeux qui me semblent doux,  
Et dans mille ans faire croire  
Ce qu'il me plaira de vous.
- " Chez cette race nouvelle  
Où j'aurai quelque crédit,  
Vous ne passerez pour belle  
Qu'autant que je l'aurai dit.
- " Pensez-y, belle Marquise,  
Quoiqu'un grison fasse effroi,  
Il vaut qu'on le courtise  
Quand il est fait comme moi."

**"THE ROSE AND THE RING."**

MR. THACKERAY spent a portion of the winter of 1854 in Rome, and while there he wrote his little Christmas story called "The Rose and the Ring." He was a great friend of the distinguished American sculptor, Mr. Story, and was a frequent visitor at his house. I have heard Mr. Story speak with emotion of the kindness of Mr. Thackeray to his little daughter, then recovering from a severe illness, and he told me that Mr. Thackeray used to come nearly every day to read to Miss Story, often bringing portions of his manuscript with him.

Five or six years afterwards Miss Story showed me a very pretty copy of "The Rose and the Ring," which Mr. Thackeray had sent her, with a facetious sketch of himself in the act of presenting her with the work.

**"NUPTIAL VERSES."**

THESE lines were published in 1863 in "A Welcome," dedicated to the Princess of Wales; and "An Aspiration" was written for two Woodcuts in "A Round of Days." (Christmas, 1865.)

**"THE JESTER'S MORAL."**

"I WISH that I could run away  
From House, and Court, and Leves:  
Where bearded men appear to-day,  
Just Eton boys grown heavy."

W. M. PRAED.

## "A GARDEN IDYLL."

WHEN these verses appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* they ran as follows, but many of my readers could not see the point, and others, seeing it, disliked it so heartily, that I altered them in sheer vexation; now they have two readings, and can take their choice.

## GERALDINE AND I.

Di te, Damasippe, desque  
Verum ob consilium docent tonsore.

I HAVE talk'd with her often in noon-day heat,  
We have walk'd under wintry skies;  
Her voice is the dearest voice, and sweet  
Is the light in her gentle eyes;  
It is bliss in the silent woods, among  
Gay crowds, or in any place,  
To mould her mind, to gaze in her young  
Confiding face.

For ever may roses divinely blow,  
And wine-dark pansies charm  
By that prim box path where I felt the glow  
Of her dimpled, trusting arm,  
And the sweep of her silk as she turn'd and  
smiled  
A smile as fair as her pearls;  
The breeze was in love with the darling child,  
And coax'd her curls.

She show'd me her ferns and woodbine sprays,  
Foxglove and jasmine stars,  
A mist of blue in the beds, a blaze  
Of red in the celadon jars :  
And velvety bees in convolvulus bells,  
And roses of bountiful Spring.  
But I said—"Though roses and bees have  
spells,  
They have thorn and sting."

She show'd me ripe peaches behind a net  
As fine as her veil, and fat  
Gold fish a-gape, who lazily met  
For her crumbs—I grudged them that !  
A squirrel, some rabbits with long lop ears,  
And guinea-pigs, tortoise-shell—wee ;  
And I told her that eloquent truth inheres  
In all we see.

I lifted her doe by its lops, quoth I,  
" Even here deep meaning lies,—  
Why have squirrels these ample tails, and why  
Have rabbits these prominent eyes ? "  
She smiled and said, as she twirl'd her veil,  
" For some nice little cause, no doubt—  
If you lift a guinea-pig up by the tail  
His eyes drop out ! "

1868.

" ST. JAMES'S STREET."

I HOPE my readers, whoever they may be, will  
not credit me with all the sentiments expressed  
in this volume. I am told that these lines

have disturbed some Americans, but surely without cause. The remark in the seventh stanza is natural in the mouth of a rather exclusive habitué of St. James's, who has the mortification to feel that he is no longer young, who is too shallow-minded to appreciate our advance in civilisation during the last forty years, but who is nevertheless sufficiently keen to see what is possible in the future. My friends know I have a sincere admiration for the American people.

"A *NICE* CORRESPONDENT."

ERE long, perhaps in the next generation, the word *NICE*, and some other equally common words, may have passed into the limbo of *elegant, genteel*, &c. Fashions change, and certain words sink in the scale of gentility, and pass, like houses, into the hands of humbler occupants. But what can poor poets do!

"A WINTER FANTASY."

THE two first stanzas are imitated from Théophile Gautier.

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THE kind of verse I have attempted in *some* of the pieces in this volume was in repute during the era of Swift and Prior, and again during the earlier years of this century. Af-

terwards it fell into comparative neglect, but has now regained a little of its old popularity.

Herrick, Suckling, Waller, Swift, Prior, Cowper, Landor, Moore, Praed, and Thackeray may be considered its representative men, and each has his peculiar merit. Herrick is a finished artist, with a delightful feeling and fancy, and some of his flower-pieces are as perfect as anything of the kind in the language. We admire Suckling for his gusto, and careless, natural grace; while Waller has never been equalled for the way in which he blends his courtly wit and rhythmic elegance; his lines "To a Rose," and "On a Girdle," in these respects, leave nothing to be desired. Swift is pre-eminent for the intensity of his mordant humour, as Prior for his genial and sprightly wit, or as Hazlitt very happily expresses it, his "*mischievous gaiety*." Cowper is a master of tender and playful irony. Landor is wanting in humour and variety, but he atones for it by his pathos, and his pellucid and classical style. Moore, as a satirist, is a very expert swordsman, and although there is rather too much tinsel in his sentiment, he has wit, and fun, and music, and sparkling fancy in abundance. Praed has considerable fancy, but it is less wild than Moore's, while his sympathies are narrower than Thackeray's; he has plenty of wit, however, and a highly idiomatic, incisive, and most finished style, and, in his peculiar vein, has never been equalled,



and it may be safely affirmed, never can be excelled. What am I to say of Thackeray? As he is yet rather too near to us, I will not criticize him; but I may observe that he is almost as humorous as Swift, and occasionally almost as tender as Cowper, and one does not exactly see why he might not have been as good an artist as most of those above mentioned.

Lovelace has given us one or two little poems, by no means perfect, but which in their way are admirable. The gay and gallant Colonel is at this moment one of our really popular minor poets, and all for the sake of some two short pages of verse! Marlowe, Wotton, Ben Jonson, Raleigh, and Montrose must not be forgotten, as all have written excellently; not to speak of Carew, Sedley, Parnell ("When thy beauty appears"), Pope, Gray, Goldsmith, Captain Morris ("I'm often asked by plodding Souls"), Canning (the immortal "Needy Knife-grinder"), Luttrell, Rogers, Coleridge, Mrs. Barbauld ("Human Life"), W. R. Spencer, the brothers Smith (the inimitable "Rejected Addresses"), Haynes Bayly, Dr. Barham, Peacock ("Love and Age"), Francis Mahony ("The Bells of Shandon"), Leigh Hunt, Hood, Lord Macaulay ("A Valentine"), Mrs. Browning, and many others, dead and living.

Light lyrical verse should be short, elegant, refined, and fanciful, not seldom distinguished by chastened sentiment, and often playful, and

it should have one uniform and simple design. The tone should not be pitched high, and the language should be idiomatic, the rhythm crisp and sparkling, the rhyme frequent and never forced, while the entire poem should be marked by tasteful moderation, high finish, and completeness; for however trivial the subject matter may be, indeed rather in proportion to its triviality, subordination to the rules of composition, and perfection of execution, should be strictly enforced. Each piece cannot be expected to exhibit all these characteristics, but the qualities of brevity and buoyancy are essential.

It should also have the air of being spontaneous; indeed, to write it well is a difficult accomplishment, and no one has fully succeeded in it without possessing a certain gift of irony, which is not only a rarer quality than humour, or even wit, but is altogether less commonly met with than is sometimes imagined. The poem may be tinged with a well-bred philosophy, it may be gay and gallant, it may be playfully malicious or tenderly ironical, it may display lively banter, and it may be satirically facetious, it may even, considering it as a mere work of art, be pagan in its philosophy or trifling in its tone, but it must never be ponderous or commonplace. It is needless to say that good sense will be found to underlie all the best poetry of whatever kind. There are good poets whose productions are more poet-

ished than finished, their stanzas are less perfect than their single lines, and their whole poems are not so satisfactory as either; and again there are better poets who are more finished than polished; now it seems to me that both qualities are peculiar to, and are pretty equally balanced in the best productions of the authors I have mentioned above.

It is interesting to see what Voltaire\* says of rhyme, its value, and its difficulties, and then to observe with how little success it is usually practised. Rhyme and alliteration cannot be too important features in burlesque verse. They may be prominent in satire and semi-humorous poetry, but their presence should be less and less marked as the poem rises in tone. It is consoling to find that the most worn and the worst used rhymes and metres instantly recover all their charm and freshness in the hands of a master.

This volume is now arranged finally. It is with diffidence that I again offer it to the public. No one is so painfully aware as myself of its many shortcomings, its extreme insignifi-

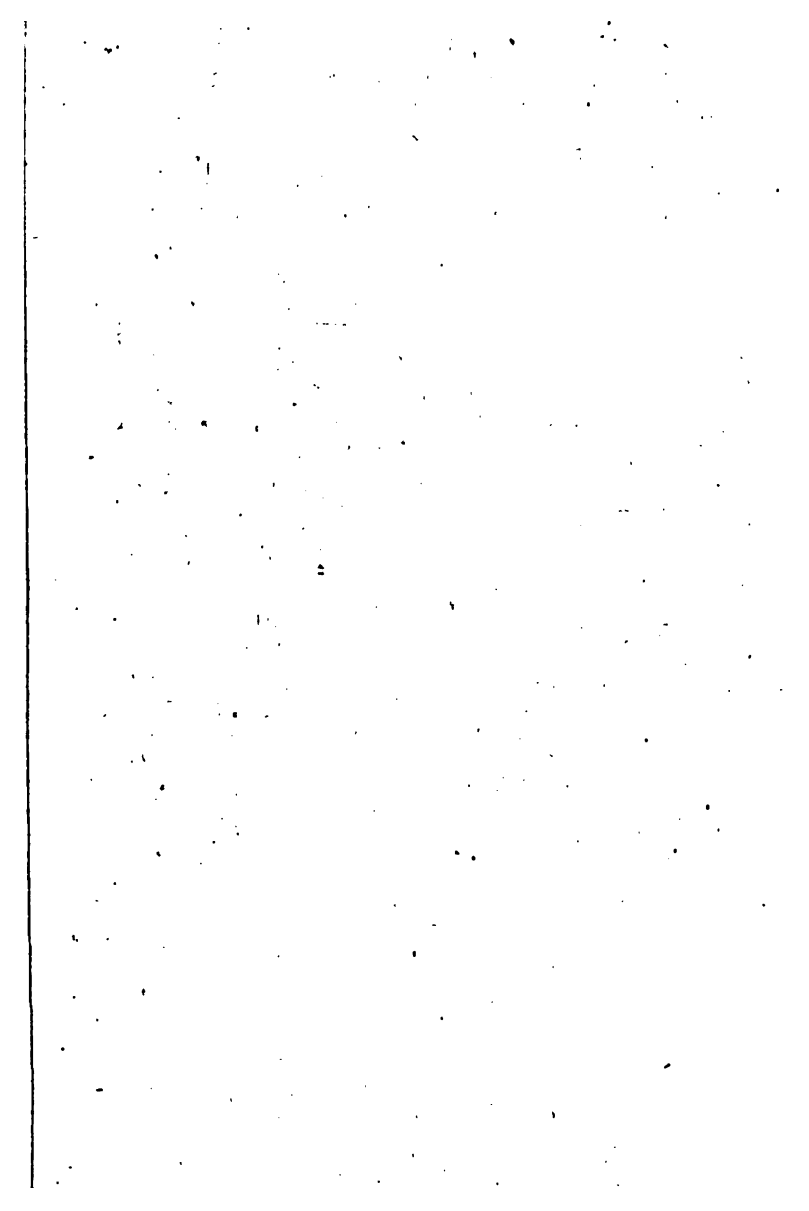
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\* "We insist that the rhyme shall cost nothing to the ideas, that it shall neither be trivial, nor too far-fetched; we exact rigorously in a verse the same purity, the same precision, as in prose. We do not admit the smallest license; we require an author to carry without a break all these chains, and yet that he should appear ever free."

cance, and its great incompleteness, and I never felt it more keenly than now, in sending out this the eighth edition. My dear reader, if I have included pieces which ought to have been consigned to the dust-bin of immediate oblivion, I hope you will forgive me.

THE END.





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